

Massachusetts Joint Committee on Education Public Hearing Submission

June 17, 2019

assembled by
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Testimony March 22, 2019

Year after year parents civil rights erode as it pertains to their child's education.

The current leadership of the DESE is actively working against the interests of parents and teachers in this Commonwealth.

DESE has already changed regulations in order to implement this "Emergency Law" you are considering. But the public is unaware of these changes.

603 CMR 2.03 (2) (d) 1,2

603 CMR 2.03 (3) (a) 1 b ii

603 CMR 2.03 (3) (b) 1 b iv

603 CMR 2.03 (6) (a) 3

These proposals show up every couple of years and gauge how many parents are paying attention. The governor is trying to pass a law that LIMITS the power of school

committees, superintendents, teachers, and most importantly-parents. This law INCREASES the power of 1 individual-the commissioner.

S.2442 S.279

This “Emergency Law” allows 1 individual the power to place schools into receivership. It allows 1 individual to implement turn-around plans to get around the charter school cap. This law also undermines teacher unions.

H.70 lines 64-69

This law allows 1 individual the ability to withhold money in a special bank account that gives that SAME INDIVIDUAL full autonomy to spend.

H.70 lines 64-73

Where is the voice of the people? Where is the voice of parents and teachers? We are outnumbered 8-3 on the Board of Education.

In 2017, voters overwhelmingly affirmed that DESE was moving in the wrong direction. The people voted AGAINST question 2. We voted against the expansion of charter schools. We requested the removal of high-stakes testing.

This Emergency Law will override any future debate about education. This Emergency Law gives 1 person unlimited power and provides NO OVERSIGHT.

Under current Massachusetts law, a school superintendent can appoint a receiver to advise or control any school in their district. The superintendent currently uses multiple factors in making these decisions.

With passage of this “Emergency Law”, a superintendent or commissioner would need ONLY 1 reason for a school takeover.

H.70 lines 53-57

For example, if a mere 5.1% of students in a school refuse to take the PARCC/MCAS test, that school would qualify for a state takeover. In a school of 400 students, if 21 of those students refuse the test, that school would qualify for a state takeover.

DESE document “glossary of 2018 accountability reporting terms” updated November 29, 2018.

With this law comes 1.1 billion dollars worth of outside influence managing our schools.

H.70 cover letter

Under this law, the commissioner would be free to force a school to adopt a program it didn't want. Or to mandate examiners who will push and enforce programs teachers do not want or need to participate in.

H70 lines 53-57

We need to restore local control over public education. The current leadership of the DESE is actively working against the interests of parents and teachers in this Commonwealth.

AMENDED JUNE THIRD at 9:45 PM

Fixes Incorrect Reference to Bill H.70's current Committee status.

7:20 PM

My name is Scott Andrade. I live in Salem, MA.

June 03, 2019

Three attempts to take away local control from parents and towns have occurred.

Number One:

Governor Baker proposed EMERGENCY LAW H.70. An Act to Promote Equity and Excellence in Education.

The “Emergency Bill” released on January 23, 2019 included the following text in an accompanying letter...

“Therefore, my bill strengthens the AUTHORITY of the Commissioner of Elementary Secondary Education to intervene in persistently underperforming schools, including the ability to REQUIRE certain improvement steps and to temporarily retain a portion of Chapter 70 funding in a new School Turnaround Trust Fund, pending the district's implementation of HIS school improvement recommendations.”

H.70 had a public hearing on March 22 of this year. I was there to comment on one specific thing. An overarching expansion of powers given to one individual.

~~Currently this Bill sits at the Ways and Means Committee.~~

CORRECTION:

This Bill was not passed out of the Joint Education Committee.

That was takeover attempt number one.

Number Two:

This past Friday, I learned of a news article about the City of New Bedford. The city, against the will of many stakeholders, almost signed a public school away to an existing in town Charter Management company. This Company had another school in town and was looking to expand. It reminds me of when this School Committee gave away the Bentley School.

The only thing saving that town was that H.70 had not been passed as quickly as hoped by Charlie Baker, James Peyser, Jeff Riley and Paul Sagan.

The deal ultimately failed.

Takeover attempt 2 was thwarted by the public and at least one brave Senator.

Number Three:

I was listening to the FYI Salem High School Redesign podcast. It was stated that DESE uses Project Lead the Way (PLTW) as an indicator under it's percentile ranking calculations. That is not true. That is a proposed rule. I know that because I submitted a public comment this past friday regarding that exact passage. I have included both the current accountability measures and the 2019 proposed changes in the document provided.

DESE has proposed to name a specific non-profit organization in it's Accountability Indicator regulations. A privately controlled education curriculum provider, who has no legal requirement to respond to any Public Request Inquiry anyone might submit, should not be named in regulation.

I am hoping to get much more information about Project Lead The Way and how all of the new Discovery Pathways will be implemented at the High School in the coming year.

I am curious as to how far along the implementation process has gotten and if any of Salem's students were involved in last years field testing of materials and/or assessments related to Project Lead The Way.

In 2015 a majority of the public rejected PARCC testing and still feels the same about high-stakes testing in general. What the public really hates are The Common Core State Standards. The public will be angry when they realize that this State currently use the same testing contractor and the same computer assessment template as PARCC.

They will be so much angrier when they realize that the Common Core Standards are still used in all Massachusetts classrooms. Project Lead the Way and The Next Generation Learning Center both openly promote adherence to the same Standards rejected by over 200,000 Massachusetts voters. There are now two recently published studies showing student performance dropping as a result of Common Core implementation.

Both my children have never taken the PARCC or MCAS 2.0 assessment. It would be much harder to opt out of curriculum.

In the fall of 2015, just before the vote to proceed to a hybrid version of the PARCC/MCAS test, DESE brought forth two speakers at a Board Meeting to talk about their experience the new PARCC assessment.

One of the speakers testimony openly described a flawed test question/item creation process. DESE's own witness proclaimed no faith in the exam's quality.

In 2016, a Maryland Education Department peer review requested further information regarding the bias/sensitivity training aspect of item creation.

In 2019, Massachusetts asked minority students to answer a racist essay question on the most recent MCAS 2.0 assessment. DESE instructs children not to talk about the test.

Salem will now expand that lack of oversight to curriculum providers.

Project Lead the Way provides digital content. It seems to re-structure the way a classroom operates. It also re-trains teachers to teach the PLTW way.

It should surprise no one to find out that Project Lead the Way, the exact program DESE calls out by name in it's most recent proposed changes to the Accountability System (April 2019), is already in Salem.

You will not be able to turn the culture of your school around by working against the Teachers and Parents. Under the PLTW System, everyone loses.

Teachers will become low paid proctors. Around 8,600 Teach for America Corps are currently teaching across the United States while 42,000 work "across sectors".

You can make much more money on the business end working as an "Educator" and providing access to "content" for the "consumer" than you can working in the classroom and providing a safe, healthy learning environment as a teacher.

That is backwards. You have no community buy in and you never will. MASSIdeas and New Profit bought their way into Salem for 250,000 dollars. Project Lead the Way has succeeded through grant money, not reputation.

I spent much of April and May trying to figure out what has happened with regard to the Salem School District since 2014.

Salem recently fired the High School Principal and the Superintendent. Salem has hired a new High School Principal and is about to hire a Superintendent.

If the Commissioner were to step in and take over Salem High School, only one thing would be done differently. The Commissioner would instantly break any and all collective bargaining agreements.

Interestingly enough, under current Massachusetts Law, if a Superintendent wanted to force a school to participate in a program like Project Lead the Way, or appoint an Examiner, or a Receiver...they could under the right classification. They would only need one reason to institute educational martial law. If the School Committee objected, they would have to appeal to the Commissioner. Attack number three of 2019 is not over yet.

I think working with the Boys and Girls club is logical and schools should definitely evolve to offer more health and tutoring services. All sorts of wrap-around services would be wonderful. I even agree with Arne Duncan when he spoke of schools acting like community centers.

The pathway model for the high school makes sense in theory. This town could design it's own curriculum instead of setting up a model where we rely on outside corporations for curriculum.

The Teachers of Salem are capable of developing and executing their own curriculum. Salem's Teachers deserve better that what this Committee has given them.

I do not agree with how the Education Reform movement treats teachers.

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Massachusetts Joint Committee on Education
Public Comment submission June 17, 2019: Assessment Hearing

Dear Committee Members,

Passing a bill like H.431 would be a great signal to parents, teachers and students.

It would signal that the State Legislature realized that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) was acting overzealously in it's desire to re-design Public Education.

Three years of no penalty testing would allow parents the opportunity to inject our voices back into the conversation.

H.431: An Act to Place a Moratorium on High-Stakes Testing

The first three sections of H.431 should be passed as soon as possible.

An amendment should be proposed to strike sections 4 and 5 from the text of the Act.

Stop with the Committees and Boards and Task forces. Work on providing resources.

Section 5 should have occurred in 2014 or 2015. I would be happy to consult.

The inclusion of Section 5 in the text of the Act makes it seem like the State Auditor is currently not allowed to conduct oversight over the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The rate at which DESE has changed regulations involving accountability is concerning.

The rate at which schools are being taken over has increased significantly with the implementation of a new DESE Accountability System in 2018 (see the attached packet for some examples of change).

20% of a High School's accountability weighting is currently calculated by measuring student growth across 10th grade ELA and Math scores. This percentage is calculated using different cohorts. How can you be judged on student growth in test scores if the students taking the test (providing the data) are different each year?

As I understand it...State law currently allows 4% of schools to be declared underperforming or chronically underperforming at one time. An even smaller percentage of those schools are required to submit a "Turnaround Plan" to the DESE Commissioner for implementation.

Changes made to the accountability system in 2018 allow the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to require 15% of schools to use the many of the same turnaround programs reserved for schools labeled "underperforming or chronically underperforming schools."

Turnaround Plans are now so common there is a web based DESE "turnaround template" to use.

Somewhere along the DESE regulation line, it became ok to add 11% more schools to the takeover mix. "Turnaround" is a way to get around the State Charter School Cap.

My son's future High School is one of the many schools now REQUIRED to file a "Turnaround Plan" and work with The Statewide System of Support (SSoS).

All schools with the label "in need of focused/targeted support" have been sent letters from the state forcing them to submit to a Commissioner approved "turnaround plan" process. These letters are included in the packet of information I prepared recently for the Salem School Committee (I will attach that packet to the dropbox file as well).

The "focused/targeted support" category is a separate classification from "underperforming and chronically underperforming."

Salem High School was level three when they first accepted Grant money from DESE to start the turnaround process a few years ago.

Last Monday the public was finally able to view the draft version of the "Salem Turnaround Plan" as it was released for public comment.

I hope the Committee will attribute as much weight to this written statement as if I were there reading it myself. I am not able to spend time in front of your Committee at this Assessment Hearing because I have less than two weeks to read, research and comment on proposed changes to my town's entire High School Structure.

Currently I am in the process of waiting 10 days to find out who was presenting Redesign Headlines at the “High School Redesign Convening” a few weeks ago.

The new High School Principal/Receiver was not there (she subsequently quit), but there were several people talking about the redesign process who have no apparent job descriptions.

The Community had no access to any draft version of a turnaround plan before the two High School Redesign meetings took place. That made asking questions really hard.

Salem, in conjunction with the SsoS, has added several layers of administration to our school governance structure in order to satisfy what DESE claims are evidence-based turnaround practices.

Rather than providing resources our teachers and students could use in the classroom to improve student outcomes...it seems we are going to concentrate on things like adding a School Council to the High School. Kind of like a sub-school committee?

Yet another layer of government between the People and the Administration will receive final approval when Salem submits its Turnaround Plan to the State on the 28th of this month. It is definitely not what the community wants, but it is what we will probably get anyway.

The irony being, if you read the recent “360 review” of the now fired Salem Superintendents performance, you will see one of the main complaints parents, teachers, and staff all had was the top heavy nature of Salem's administration and the lack of communication it presents/promotes.

Salem is currently revolting against a School Administration that has worked behind closed doors to advance a reform agenda the community does not approve of for years.

In March, I sat before you asking for help.

Today I ask again. Pause High-Stakes testing.

Pass Sections 1 thru 3 of H.431 as soon as possible please.

Sincerely,

Scott Andrade

**Section Two: 2017 DESE Educator Evaluation Changes
(current law)
pg 15-30**

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS ON OR SCHOOL EVALUATION OF EDUCATORS

603 CMR 35.00

- * Presented to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for initial review and vote to solicit public comment: **November 29, 2016**
- * Period of public comment: **through January 27, 2017**
- * Final action by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education anticipated: **February 28, 2017**

Summary: Currently, under the existing regulations, teachers and administrators receive two separate ratings, a summative rating and a student impact rating. The regulations established a timeline of staggered implementation, with districts adopting a process for determining a summative rating first and subsequently adopting the process for determining the student impact rating. Over the last few years, districts have successfully implemented the process for determining the summative rating. Implementing the process for determining an educator's student impact rating has been more challenging. The Department has discussed with stakeholders and now is proposing amendments to the regulations to address concerns. These amendments eliminate the separate student impact rating, while maintaining student learning as a central consideration in the educator evaluation process. This approach will address the concerns about a separate impact rating while retaining evidence of student learning based on multiple measures, including common assessments and statewide student growth measures, as an important component of the summative performance rating. In addition, the proposed amendments also include technical changes unrelated to the student impact rating, such as removing provisions describing timelines that have expired.

See below for the full text of the regulations, with the proposed amendments redlined. The regulations are posted at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr35.html>.

603 CMR 35.00

Evaluation of Educators

Section:

[35.01:](#) Scope, Purpose, and Authority

[35.02:](#) Definitions

[35.03:](#) Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice

[35.04:](#) Standards and Indicators of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice

[35.05:](#) Evaluation of Administrators under Individual Employment Contracts

[35.06:](#) Evaluation Cycle

[35.07:](#) Evidence Used in Evaluation

[35.08:](#) Performance Level Ratings

[35.09:](#) Student Performance Measures

[35.10:](#) Peer Assistance and Review

[35.11:](#) Implementation and Reporting

[View All Sections](#)

Most Recently Amended by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education: December 17, 2013.

35.01: Scope, Purpose, and Authority

(1) 603 CMR 35.00 is adopted pursuant to authority granted to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in M.G.L. c.69, §1B and c.71, §38.

(2) The specific purposes of evaluation under M.G.L. c.71, §38 and 603 CMR 35.00 are:

- (a) to promote student learning, growth, and achievement by providing educators with feedback for improvement, enhanced opportunities for professional growth, and clear structures for accountability, and
- (b) to provide a record of facts and assessments for personnel decisions.

(3) The purpose of 603 CMR 35.00 is to ensure that every school committee has a system to enhance the professionalism and accountability of teachers and administrators that will enable them to assist all students to perform at high levels. 603 CMR 35.00 sets out the principles of evaluation for Massachusetts public schools and districts. 603 CMR 35.00 requires that school committees establish a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process for teachers and administrators, consistent with these principles, to assure effective teaching and administrative leadership in the Commonwealth's public schools.

(4) The regulations on evaluation of educators, 603 CMR 35.00, constitute the principles of evaluation established by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

35.02: Definitions

As used in 603 CMR 35.00, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, terms shall have the following meanings:

Administrator shall mean any person employed in a school district in a position requiring a certificate or license as described in 603 CMR 7.09(1) through (5) or who has been approved as an administrator in the area of vocational education as provided in 603 CMR 4.00 *et seq.* or who is employed in a comparable position in a collaborative, and who is not employed under an individual employment contract.

Artifacts shall mean products of an educator's work that demonstrate knowledge and skills of the educator with respect to specific performance standards.

Board shall mean the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education or a person duly authorized by the Board.

Commissioner shall mean the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education or his designee.

Common Assessments shall mean identical or comparable assessments of student learning, growth, and achievement related to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Frameworks, or other relevant frameworks used by educators in the same role across the district. These assessments may be commercial assessments or district developed, and may include, but are not limited to: portfolios, pre- and post tests, unit and course assessments, performance assessments, and capstone projects.

Department shall mean the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

~~*District-determined Measures* shall mean measures of student learning, growth, and achievement related to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Frameworks, or other relevant frameworks, that are comparable across grade or subject level district-wide. These measures may include, but shall not be limited to: portfolios, approved commercial assessments and district-developed pre and post unit and course assessments, and capstone projects.~~

Educator Plan shall mean the growth or improvement actions identified as part of each educator's evaluation. The type and duration of the plan shall be determined by the evaluator. The Educator Plan shall include, but is not limited to, at least one goal related to the improvement of practice, one goal for the improvement of student learning, an action plan with benchmarks for goals established in the Plan, and the evaluator's final assessment of the educator's attainment of the goals. All elements of the Educator Plan are subject to the evaluator's approval. There shall be four types of Educator Plans:

- *Developing Educator Plan* shall mean a plan, developed by the educator and the evaluator for one school year or less for an administrator in the first three years in a district; or for a teacher without Professional Teacher Status; or, at the discretion of an evaluator, for an educator in a new assignment.
- *Self-directed Growth Plan* shall mean a plan of one or two school years for experienced educators who are rated proficient or exemplary, developed by the educator.
- *Directed Growth Plan* shall mean a plan of one school year or less for educators who are in need of improvement, developed by the educator and the evaluator.
- *Improvement Plan* shall mean a plan of at least thirty calendar days and no more than one school year for educators who are rated unsatisfactory, developed by the evaluator with goals specific to improving the educator's unsatisfactory performance.

Educator(s) shall mean teacher(s) and administrator(s).

Evaluation shall mean the ongoing process of defining goals and identifying, gathering and using information to improve professional performance (the "formative evaluation" and "formative assessment") and to assess total job effectiveness and make personnel decisions (the "summative evaluation").

Evaluator shall mean any person designated by a superintendent who has responsibility for evaluation.

Expected Impact shall mean the educator meets or exceeds anticipated student learning gains on multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement. The evaluator shall use professional judgment to determine whether the educator is having expected impact on student learning, based on student learning gains on common assessments and, where available, statewide student growth measures. The evaluator's professional judgment may include, but is not limited to, consideration of the educator's student population and specific learning context. Anticipated student learning gains must be consistent across the district for common assessments and agreed upon by the educator and evaluator for other assessments. The Department shall establish anticipated student learning gains for statewide student growth measures in guidance.

Experienced Educator shall mean an administrator with more than three years in an administrative position in the school district or a teacher with Professional Teacher Status.

Family shall mean parents, legal guardians, or primary caregivers.

Formative Assessment shall mean the process used to assess progress towards attaining goals set forth in educator plans, performance on performance standards, or both. This process may take place at any time(s) during the cycle of evaluation.

Formative Evaluation shall mean an evaluation at the end of year one for educators on two-year self-directed plans used to arrive at a rating on progress towards attaining the goals set forth in the plans, performance on performance standards, or both.

Goal shall mean a specific, actionable, and measurable area of improvement as set forth in an educator's plan. A goal may pertain to any or all of the following: educator practice in relation to performance standards, educator practice in relation to indicators, or specified improvement in student learning, growth, and achievement. Goals may be developed by individual educators, by the evaluator, or by teams, departments, or groups of educators who have the same role.

~~*Impact on Student Learning* shall mean at least the trend in student learning, growth, and achievement and may also include patterns in student learning, growth, and achievement.~~

Measurable shall mean that which can be classified or estimated, in relation to a scale, rubric, or standards.

Model System shall mean the comprehensive educator evaluation system designed and updated as needed by the Department, as an exemplar for use by districts. The Model System shall include tools, guidance, rubrics, and contract language developed by the Department that satisfy the requirements of 603 CMR 35.00.

Multiple Measures shall include a combination of classroom, school, and district assessments and student growth percentiles where available.

Observation shall mean a data gathering process that includes notes and judgments made during one or more classroom or worksite visit(s) of any duration by the evaluator and may include examination of artifacts of practice. An observation may occur in person or through video.

~~*Patterns* shall mean consistent results from multiple measures.~~

Performance Rating shall be used to describe the educator's performance. There shall be four performance ratings:

- *Exemplary* shall mean that the educator's performance consistently and significantly exceeds the requirements of a standard or overall.
- *Proficient* shall mean that the educator's performance fully and consistently meets the requirements of a standard or overall.
- *Needs improvement* shall mean that the educator's performance on a standard or overall is below the requirements of a standard or overall, but is not considered to be unsatisfactory at this time. Improvement is necessary and expected.
- *Unsatisfactory* shall mean that the educator's performance on a standard or overall has not significantly improved following a rating of needs improvement, or the educator's performance is consistently below the requirements of a standard or overall and is considered inadequate, or both.

Performance Standards shall mean the performance standards locally developed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, §38 and consistent with, and supplemental to, 603 CMR 35.00.

Professional Teacher Status or PTS shall mean the status granted to a teacher pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, §41.

Rubric shall mean a scoring tool that describes characteristics of practice or artifacts at different levels of performance.

School Committee shall mean the school committee in all cities, towns, and regional school districts, local and district trustees for vocational education, educational collaborative boards, boards of trustees for the county agricultural schools, and the boards of trustees of charter schools.

Standards and Indicators shall mean the Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice, 603 CMR 35.03 and the Standards and Indicators of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice, 603 CMR 35.04.

Summative Evaluation shall mean an evaluation used to arrive at a rating on each standard, an overall rating, and as a basis to make personnel decisions. The summative evaluation includes the evaluator's judgments of the educator's performance against performance standards and the educator's attainment of goals set forth in the educator's plan.

Superintendent shall mean the person employed by the school committee pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, §59 or §59A. The superintendent is responsible for the implementation of 603 CMR 35.00. The superintendent shall be evaluated by the school committee pursuant to 603 CMR 35.00 and such other standards as may be established by the school committee.

Teacher shall mean any person employed in a school district in a position requiring a certificate or license as described in 603 CMR 7.04(3) or who has been approved as an instructor in the area of vocational education as provided in 603 CMR 4.00 *et seq.* or who is employed in a comparable position in a collaborative.

~~Trends shall be based on at least two years of data.~~

35.03: Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice

School committees shall establish evaluation systems and Performance Standards for the evaluation of all teachers that include all of the principles of evaluation, set forth in 603 CMR 35.00-35.11. School committees may supplement the standards and indicators in 603 CMR 35.03 with additional measurable performance standards and indicators consistent with state law and collective bargaining agreements where applicable. The district shall adapt the indicators based on the role of the teacher to reflect and to allow for significant differences in assignments and responsibilities. The district shall share the Performance Standards with teachers employed by the district.

(1) Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment standard: Promotes the learning and growth of all students by providing high quality and coherent instruction, designing and administering authentic and meaningful student assessments, analyzing student performance and growth data, using this data to improve instruction, providing students with constructive feedback on an on-going basis, and continuously refining learning objectives.

(a) Curriculum and Planning indicator: Knows the subject matter well, has a good grasp of child development and how students learn, and designs effective and rigorous standards-based units of instruction consisting of well-structured lessons with measurable outcomes.

(b) Assessment indicator: Uses a variety of informal and formal methods of assessment to measure student learning, growth, and understanding, develop differentiated and enhanced learning experiences, and improve future instruction.

(c) Analysis indicator: Analyzes data from assessments, draws conclusions, and shares them appropriately.

-

(2) Teaching All Students standard: Promotes the learning and growth of all students through instructional practices that establish high expectations, create a safe and effective classroom environment, and demonstrate cultural proficiency.

(a) Instruction indicator: Uses instructional practices that reflect high expectations regarding content and quality of effort and work, engage all students, and are personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness.

(b) Learning Environment indicator: Creates and maintains a safe and collaborative learning environment that values diversity and motivates students to take academic risks, challenge themselves, and claim ownership of their learning.

(c) Student Learning indicator: Consistently Demonstrates expected impact on student learning based on multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement. For teachers who are responsible for direct instruction, these measures must include student progress on common assessments and, where available, statewide student growth measures.

(de) Cultural Proficiency indicator: Actively creates and maintains an environment in which students' diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges are respected.

(ed) Expectations indicator: Plans and implements lessons that set clear and high expectations and make knowledge accessible for all students.

(3) Family and Community Engagement standard: Promotes the learning and growth of all students through effective partnerships with families, caregivers, community members, and organizations.

(a) Engagement indicator: Welcomes and encourages every family to become active participants in the classroom and school community.

(b) Collaboration indicator: Collaborates with families to create and implement strategies for supporting student learning and development both at home and at school.

(c) Communication indicator: Engages in regular, two-way, and culturally proficient communication with families about student learning and performance.

(4) Professional Culture standard: Promotes the learning and growth of all students through ethical, culturally proficient, skilled, and collaborative practice.

(a) Reflection indicator: Demonstrates the capacity to reflect on and improve the educator's own practice, using informal means as well as meetings with teams and work groups to gather information, analyze data, examine issues, set meaningful goals, and develop new approaches in order to improve teaching and learning.

(b) Professional Growth indicator: Actively pursues professional development and learning opportunities to improve quality of practice or build the expertise and experience to assume different instructional and leadership roles.

(c) Collaboration indicator: Collaborates effectively with colleagues on a wide range of tasks.

(d) Decision-making indicator: Becomes involved in school-wide decision-making, and takes an active role in school improvement planning.

(e) Shared Responsibility indicator: Shares responsibility for the performance of all students within the school.

(f) Professional Responsibilities indicator: Is ethical and reliable, and meets routine responsibilities consistently.

35.04: Standards and Indicators of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice

School committees shall establish evaluation systems and performance standards for the evaluation of administrators that include all of the principles of evaluation, set forth in 603 CMR 35.00-35.11. School committees may supplement the standards and indicators in 603 CMR 35.04 with additional measurable performance standards consistent with state law and collective bargaining agreements where applicable. The district shall adapt the indicators based on the role of the administrator to reflect and allow for significant differences in assignment and responsibilities. The district shall share the performance standards with all administrators.

(1) Instructional Leadership standard: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes effective teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

(a) Curriculum indicator: Ensures that all teachers design effective and rigorous standards-based units of instruction consisting of well-structured lessons with measurable outcomes.

(b) Instruction indicator: Ensures that instructional practices in all settings reflect high expectations regarding content and quality of effort and work, engage all students, and are personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness.

(c) Assessment indicator: Ensures that all teachers use a variety of formal and informal methods and assessments to measure student learning, growth and understanding, and also make necessary adjustments to their practice when students are not learning.

(d) Evaluation indicator: Provides effective and timely supervision and evaluation in alignment with state regulations and contract provisions, including:

1. Ensures educators pursue meaningful, actionable, and measurable professional practice and student learning goals.
2. Makes frequent unannounced visits to classrooms and gives targeted and constructive feedback to teachers.
3. Exercises sound judgment in assigning ratings for performance and impact on student learning.
4. Reviews alignment between judgment about practice and data about student learning, growth, or achievement when evaluating and rating educators and understands that the supervisor has the responsibility to confirm the rating in cases where a discrepancy exists.

(e) Data-informed Decision-making indicator: Uses multiple sources of evidence related to student learning, including state, district, and school assessment results and growth data, to inform school and district goals and improve organizational performance, educator effectiveness, and student learning.

(f) Student Learning indicator: Consistently Demonstrates expected impact on student learning based on multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, including student progress on common assessments and statewide student growth measures where available.

(2) Management and Operations standard: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

(a) Environment indicator: Develops and executes effective plans, procedures, routines and operational systems to address a full range of safety, health, emotional, and social needs of students.

(b) Human Resources Management and Development indicator: Implements a cohesive approach to recruitment, hiring, induction, development, and career growth that promotes high quality and effective practice.

(c) Scheduling and Management Information Systems indicator: Uses systems to ensure optimal use of time for teaching, learning and collaboration.

(d) Laws, Ethics and Policies indicator: Understands and complies with state and federal laws and mandates, school committee policies, collective bargaining agreements, and ethical guidelines.

(e) Fiscal Systems indicator: Develops a budget that supports the district's vision, mission and goals; allocates and manages expenditures consistent with district/school level goals and available resources.

(3) Family and Community Engagement standard: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

(a) Engagement indicator: Actively ensures that all families are welcome members of the classroom and school community and can contribute to the classroom, school, and community's effectiveness.

(b) Sharing Responsibility indicator: Continuously collaborates with families to support student learning and development both at home and at school.

(c) Communication indicator: Engages in regular, two-way, culturally proficient communication with families about student learning and performance.

(d) Family Concerns indicator: Addresses family concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner.

(4) Professional Culture standard: Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

(a) Commitment to High Standards indicator: Fosters a shared commitment to high standards of teaching and learning with high expectations for achievement for all, including:

1. Mission and Core Values: Develops, promotes, and secures staff commitment to core values that guide the development of a succinct, results-oriented mission statement and ongoing decision-making.
2. Meetings: Plans and leads well-run and engaging meetings that have clear purpose, focus on matters of consequence, and engage participants in a thoughtful and productive series of conversations and deliberations about important school matters.

(b) Cultural Proficiency indicator: Ensures that policies and practices enable staff members and students to contribute to and interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment in which students' backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges are respected.

(c) Communications indicator: Demonstrates strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills

(d) Continuous Learning indicator: Develops and nurtures a culture in which all staff members are reflective about their practice and use student data, current research, best practices and theory to continuously adapt instruction and achieve improved results. Models these behaviors in the administrator's own practice.

(e) Shared Vision indicator: Successfully and continuously engages all stakeholders in the creation of a shared educational vision in which every student is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and careers, and can become responsible citizens and community contributors.

(f) Managing Conflict indicator: Employs strategies for responding to disagreement and dissent, constructively resolving conflict, and building consensus throughout a district/school community.

35.05: Evaluation of Administrators under Individual Employment Contracts

Districts shall have a system of evaluation for administrators under individual employment contracts that reflects the purposes in 603 CMR 35.01(2), and adapts the Standards and Indicators for Effective Administrative Leadership Practice and the procedures in 603 CMR 35.04-35.11 as applicable to the role and contract of the administrator. Nothing in these regulations shall abridge the authority of a school or district to dismiss or non-renew an educator consistent with applicable law, including G.L. c. 71, §§ 41 and 42.

35.06: Evaluation Cycle

(1) School committees shall adopt either the Model System designed and regularly updated by the Department, or a locally developed system that is consistent with these principles. The evaluation system shall include the evaluation cycle set forth in 603 CMR 35.06.

(2) The evaluation cycle shall include self-assessment addressing Performance Standards established through collective bargaining or included in individual employment contracts.

(a) Each educator shall be responsible for gathering and providing to the evaluator information on the educator's performance, which shall include:

1. an analysis of evidence of student learning, growth, and achievement for students under the educator's responsibility;
2. an assessment of practice against Performance Standards; and
3. proposed goals to pursue to improve practice and student learning, growth, and achievement.

(b) The educator shall provide such information, in the form of self-assessment, in a timely manner to the evaluator at the point of goal setting and plan development.

(c) The evaluator shall consider the information provided by the educator and all other relevant information.

(3) The evaluation cycle shall include goal setting and development of an Educator Plan.

(a) Evaluators shall use evidence of educator performance and impact on student learning, growth, and achievement in goal setting with the educator based on the educator's self-assessment and other sources that the evaluator shares with the educator.

(b) Evaluators and educators shall consider creating goals for teams, departments, or groups of educators who share responsibility for student results.

(c) The evaluator retains final authority over goals to be included in an educator's plan.

(d) Educator Plans shall be designed to provide educators with feedback for improvement, professional growth, and leadership; and to ensure educator effectiveness and overall system accountability.

(e) During the development of the Educator Plan, evaluators shall communicate clear expectations for educator impact, including but not limited to anticipated student learning gains for the multiple measures that will be used as evidence of educator performance. Anticipated student learning gains must be consistent across the district for common assessments and agreed upon by the educator and evaluator for other classroom assessments. The Department shall establish anticipated student learning gains for statewide student growth measures in guidance.

(e) An educator shall be placed on an Educator Plan based on his or her overall rating ~~and his or her impact on student learning, growth and achievement~~, provided that educators who have not yet earned Professional Teacher Status and any other employee at will shall be placed on an Educator Plan solely at the discretion of the district.

1. The Developing Educator Plan is for all administrators in their first three years with the district, teachers without Professional Teacher Status, and, at the discretion of the evaluator, educators in new assignments.

2. The Self-directed Growth Plan is for all experienced educators rated Exemplary or Proficient. ~~For educators whose impact on student learning is at least expected either moderate or high, the Educator Plan may be for up to two years. For all experienced educators rated Exemplary or Proficient whose impact on student learning is less than expected low, the evaluator shall review and discuss the educator's impact on student learning with the educator, and the Educator Plan shall be for one year and shall include one or more goals related to student learning developed on the basis of an analysis of the educator's professional practice.~~

3. Directed Growth Plan for all experienced educators rated Needs Improvement.

4. Improvement Plan for all experienced educators rated Unsatisfactory.

(f) All Educator Plans shall meet the following requirements:

1. Include a minimum of one goal to improve the educator's professional practice tied to one or more Performance Standards.

2. Include a minimum of one goal to improve the learning, growth and achievement of the students under the educator's responsibility.

3. Outline actions the educator must take to attain these goals, including but not limited to specified professional development activities, self-study, and coursework, as well as other supports that may be suggested by the evaluator or provided by the school or district.

4. Be aligned to statewide Standards and Indicators in 603 CMR 35.00 and local Performance Standards.

5. Be consistent with district and school goals.

(4) The evaluation cycle shall include implementation of the Educator Plan. It is the educator's responsibility to attain the goals in the plan and to participate in any trainings and professional development provided through the state, district, or other providers in accordance with the Educator Plan.

(5) The evaluation cycle shall include a formative assessment or a formative evaluation.

(a) The formative assessment may be ongoing throughout the evaluation cycle, but typically takes place at mid-cycle.

(b) For an ~~experienced educator rated proficient or higher and whose impact on student learning is moderate or high~~ at least expected educator on a two-year Self-directed Growth Plan, a formative evaluation takes place at the end of the first year of the two-year cycle. The educator's rating for that year shall be assumed to be the same as the previous summative rating unless evidence demonstrates a significant change in performance in which case the rating on Performance Standards may change.

(c) The educator shall have the opportunity to respond in writing to the formative assessment or evaluation.

(d) If an educator receives a formative assessment or formative evaluation that differs from the summative rating the educator had received at the beginning of the evaluation cycle, the evaluator may place the educator on a different educator plan, appropriate to the new rating.

(6) The evaluation cycle shall include a summative evaluation, in which the evaluator determines an overall rating of educator performance based on the evaluator's professional judgment and an examination of evidence that demonstrates the educator's performance against Performance Standards and evidence of the attainment of the Educator Plan goals. The educator shall have the opportunity to respond in writing to the summative evaluation.

(7) Evidence of the experienced educator's ~~impact on the learning, growth, and achievement of the students under the educator's responsibility, together with the summative evaluation rating performance,~~ shall be used as follows:

(a) For any experienced educator who receives an evaluation rating of Exemplary or Proficient, the district shall take the following actions:

1. ~~For the educator whose impact on student learning is at least expected either moderate or high,~~ The evaluator shall apply professional judgment to the evidence to place the educator on a one- or two-year Self-directed Growth Plan.

a. For educators placed on two-year Self-directed Growth plans:

a.1. The educator shall receive a summative evaluation at least every two years.

a.2. The educator may shall receive a formative evaluation at the end of the first year of the Educator Plan.

a.3. The educator may be eligible for additional roles, responsibilities and compensation, as determined by the district and through collective bargaining, where applicable.

b. For the educator whose impact on student learning is less than expected-low, the evaluator shall place the educator on a Self-directed Growth Plan. For educators placed on a one-year Self-directed Growth plan:

b.1. The educator and evaluator shall analyze the any discrepancyies in practice and student performance measures and seek to determine the cause(s) of such discrepancyies.

- b.2. The educator and evaluator shall discuss any aspects of practice that should be the focus of the plan. -
- b.3. The plan shall be for one school year in duration.
- b.4. The plan may include a goal related to examining elements of practice that may be contributing contributed to less than expected low the evaluator's decision to assign the educator to a one-year plan impact.
- b.5. The educator shall receive a summative evaluation at the end of the period determined in the plan, but at least annually.

(b) For any experienced educator who receives an evaluation rating of Needs Improvement, the district shall place the educator on a Directed Growth Plan.

- 1. The educator shall receive a summative evaluation at the end of the period determined in the Plan.
- 2. The educator must either earn at least a proficient rating in the summative evaluation, or shall be rated Unsatisfactory, and shall be placed on an improvement plan.

(c) For any experienced educator who receives an evaluation rating of Unsatisfactory, the district shall place the educator on an Improvement Plan. The educator shall receive a summative evaluation at the end of the period determined by the evaluator for the Plan.

(8) A teacher without professional teacher status, an administrator in the first three years in a position in a district, or an educator in a new assignment, may be placed on a Developing Educator Plan. The educator shall be evaluated at least annually. The existence of a plan shall not abridge the authority of a school or district to dismiss or non-renew an educator consistent with applicable law.

(9) Nothing in these regulations shall abridge the authority of a school or district to dismiss or non-renew an educator consistent with applicable law, including G.L. c. 71, §§ 41 and 42.

35.07: Evidence Used in Evaluation

(1) The following categories of evidence shall be used in evaluating each educator:

(a) For educators responsible for direct instruction, M-multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, which shall include:

- 1. Measures of student progress on classroom assessments that are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks or other relevant frameworks and are comparable within grades or subjects in a school;
- 2. Measures of student progress on learning goals set between the educator and evaluator for the school year;
- 3. Statewide growth measure(s) where available, including the MCAS Student Growth Percentile and the Massachusetts English proficiency assessment.
- 4. Common assessments of student learning, growth, and achievement~~District-determined Measure(s) of student learning comparable across grade or subject district-wide.~~

(b) For educators whose primary role is not as a classroom teacher, the appropriate measures of the educator's contribution to student learning, growth, and achievement set by the district.

(bc) Judgments based on observations and artifacts of professional practice, including unannounced observations of practice of any duration;

(ed) Additional evidence relevant to one or more Performance Standards, including, but not limited to:

1. Evidence compiled and presented by the educator including:
 - a. Evidence of fulfillment of professional responsibilities and growth, such as: self-assessments; peer collaboration; professional development linked to goals and or educator plans; contributions to the school community and professional culture;
 - b. Evidence of active outreach to and ongoing engagement with families.
2. Student feedback (with respect to teachers and support personnel) collected by the district, ~~starting in the 2013-2014 school year. On or before July 1, 2013, the Department shall identify one or more instruments for collecting student feedback and shall publish protocols for administering the instrument(s), protecting student confidentiality, and analyzing student feedback. In the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, districts are encouraged to pilot new systems, and to continue using and refining existing systems, for collecting and analyzing student feedback as part of educator evaluation.~~
3. Staff feedback (with respect to administrators) collected by the district, ~~starting in the 2013-2014 school year. On or before July 1, 2013, the Department shall identify one or more instruments for collecting staff feedback and shall publish protocols for administering the instrument(s), protecting staff confidentiality, and analyzing staff feedback. In the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, districts are encouraged to pilot new systems, and to continue using and refining existing systems, for collecting and analyzing staff feedback as part of administrator evaluation.~~
4. The Department shall research the feasibility and possible methods for districts to collect and analyze parent feedback as part of educator evaluation ~~and shall issue a report and recommendation on or before July 1, 2013.~~
5. Any other relevant evidence from any source that the evaluator shares with the educator.

(2) Evidence and professional judgment shall inform:

~~(a) the evaluator's ratings of Performance Standards and overall educator performance;~~ and

~~(b) the evaluator's assessment of the educator's impact on the learning, growth, and achievement of the students under the educator's responsibility.~~

35.08: Performance Level Ratings

(1) Each educator shall receive one of four ratings on each Performance Standard and overall.

- (a) Exemplary
- (b) Proficient
- (c) Needs Improvement
- (d) Unsatisfactory

(2) In rating educators on Performance Standards for the purposes of either formative assessment, formative evaluation, or summative evaluation, districts may use either the rubric provided by the Department in its model system or a comparably rigorous and comprehensive rubric developed by the district and reviewed by the Department.

(3) The summative evaluation rating must be based on evidence from multiple categories of evidence. MCAS growth scores cannot be the sole basis for a summative evaluation rating.

(4) To be rated Proficient overall, a teacher shall, at a minimum, have been rated Proficient on the Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment and the Teaching all Students standards for teachers, 603 CMR 35.03(1) and 35.03(2).

(5) To be rated Proficient overall, an administrator shall, at a minimum, have been rated Proficient on the Instructional Leadership standard for administrators, 603 CMR 35.04(1).

(6) Professional teacher status, pursuant to G.L. ch. 71, § 41, should be granted only to educators who have achieved ratings of proficient or exemplary on each Performance Standard and overall. A principal considering making an employment decision that would lead to professional teacher status for any educator who has not been rated proficient or exemplary on each Performance Standard and overall on the most recent evaluation shall confer with the superintendent of schools by May 1. The principal's decision is subject to review and approval by the superintendent.

(7) Educators whose summative performance rating is exemplary ~~and whose impact on student learning is rated moderate or high at least expected~~ shall ~~may~~ be recognized and rewarded with leadership roles, promotion, additional compensation, public commendation or other acknowledgement.

~~(8) Where there is a discrepancy between the rating an evaluator has provided for an educator on the Teaching all Students Standard and evidence of the educator's impact on student learning, growth and achievement, the evaluator's supervisor shall discuss the discrepancy with the evaluator. The evaluator's supervisor may note the discrepancy as a factor in the evaluator's evaluation.~~

35.09: Student Performance Measures

~~(1) Student Performance Measures as described in 603 CMR 35.07(1)(a)(3-5) shall be the basis for determining an educator's impact on student learning, growth, and achievement.~~

~~(2) The evaluator shall determine whether an educator is having a high, moderate, or low impact on student learning based on trends and patterns in the following student performance measures:~~

~~(a) At least two state or district-wide measures of student learning gains shall be employed at each school, grade, and subject in determining impact on student learning, as follows:~~

- ~~1. MCAS Student Growth Percentile and the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) shall be used as measures where available, and~~
- ~~2. Additional District-determined Measures comparable across schools, grades, and subject matter district-wide as determined by the superintendent may be used in conjunction with MCAS Student Growth Percentiles and MEPA scores to meet this requirement, and shall be used when either MCAS growth or MEPA scores are not available.~~

~~(b) For educators whose primary role is not as a classroom teacher, appropriate measures of their contribution to student learning, growth, and achievement shall be determined by the district.~~

~~(3) Based on a review of trends and patterns of state and district measures of student learning gains, the evaluator will assign the rating on growth in student performance consistent with Department guidelines:~~

~~(a) A rating of *high* indicates significantly higher than one year's growth relative to academic peers in the grade or subject.~~

~~(b) A rating of *moderate* indicates one year's growth relative to academic peers in the grade or subject.~~

~~(c) A rating of *low* indicates significantly lower than one year's student learning growth relative to academic peers in the grade or subject.~~

~~(4) For an educator whose overall performance rating is exemplary or proficient and whose impact on student learning is low, the evaluator's supervisor shall discuss and review the rating with the evaluator and the supervisor shall confirm or revise the educator's rating. In cases where the superintendent serves as the evaluator, the superintendent's decision on the rating shall not be subject to such review. When there are significant discrepancies between evidence of student learning, growth, and achievement and the evaluator's judgment on educator performance ratings, the evaluator's supervisor may note these discrepancies as a factor in the evaluator's evaluation.~~

35.102: Peer Assistance and Review

(1) Districts may develop and implement Peer Assistance and Review Programs (PAR) through the collective bargaining process.

35.101:

~~(1) 603 CMR 35.00 shall take effect according to the following schedule:~~

~~(a) Districts with Level 4 schools, as defined in 603 CMR 2.05, shall adopt and implement in the Level 4 schools evaluation systems consistent with 603 CMR 35.00 for the 2011-2012 school year.~~

~~(b) Districts that are participating in the Commonwealth's Race to the Top activities shall adopt and implement evaluation systems consistent with 603 CMR 35.00 for the 2012-2013 school year.~~

~~(c) All school districts shall adopt and implement evaluation systems consistent with 603 CMR 35.00 by the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year.~~

~~(d) A district may phase in implementation of its new evaluation system over a two-year period, with at least half of its educators being evaluated under the new system in the first year.~~

~~(2)~~ (1) All evaluation systems and changes to evaluation systems shall be subject to the Department's review to ensure the systems are consistent with the Boards' Principles of Evaluation. A District may continue to use its existing an evaluation system that it had submitted for review under 603 CMR 35.00 until the District has fully implemented its new system.

~~(3)~~ The model system developed by the Department need not be submitted for review under 603 CMR 35.00 if the district implements it as written.

~~(4)~~ By September 2013, each district shall identify and report to the Department a district-wide set of student performance measures for each grade and subject that permit a comparison of student learning gains.

~~(a) The student performance measures shall be consistent with 603 CMR 35.09(2).~~

~~(b) By July 2012, the Department shall supplement these regulations with additional guidance on the development and use of student performance measures.~~

~~(c) Until such measures are identified and data is available for at least two years, educators will not be assessed as having high, moderate, or low impact on student learning outcomes consistent with 603 CMR 35.09(3).~~

(5) Districts shall provide the Department with individual educator evaluation data for each educator in the district in a form and manner prescribed by the Commissioner, including, but not limited to:

(a) the educator's performance rating on each standard and overall; and

(b) the educator has Professional Teacher Status.

~~(c) the educator's impact on student learning, growth, and achievement (high, moderate, low).~~

(6) Any data or information that school districts or the Department or both create, send, or receive in connection with educator evaluation that is evaluative in nature and may be linked to an individual educator, including information concerning an educator's formative assessment or evaluation or summative evaluation or performance rating or the student learning, growth, and achievement data that may be used as part of an individual educator's evaluation, shall be considered personnel information within the meaning of M.G.L. c. 4, § 7(26)(c) and shall not be subject to disclosure under the public records law.

(7) The superintendent is responsible for ensuring that all evaluators have training in the principles of supervision and evaluation. All evaluations should be free of racial, sexual, religious, and other illegal discrimination and biases as defined in state and federal laws.

(8) Nothing in these regulations shall abridge the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws, including M.G.L. c. 69, c. 71 and c. 150E.

- | (96) If any section or portion of a section of 603 CMR 35.00, or the applicability of 603 CMR 35.00 to any person, entity, or circumstance is held invalid by a court, the remainder of 603 CMR 35.00 or the applicability of such provisions to other persons, entities, or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.
- | (+97) The Commissioner may, for good cause, modify the dates set forth in 603 CMR 35.00, including establishing new schedules for implementing regulatory requirements. Good cause may include the need to provide districts additional time in order to pilot for a limited period certain provisions of 603 CMR 35.00. The Commissioner shall provide notice of all such changes.

Regulatory Authority:

603 CMR 35.00: M.G.L. c.69, §1B; c.71, §38

**Section Three: Proposed DESE Accountability System
(pending approval)
pg 31-44**

Brief Description of Proposed Changes to the District and School Accountability System, Spring 2019

Participation rate calculation

- *Current method:* Calculate assessment participation rates separately for each subject (ELA, math, science) for all students and for each subgroup.
- *Proposed change:* Calculate assessment participation rates for all subjects combined at the subgroup level. The assessment participation rate calculation for the all students group remains the same (e.g., calculated separately for each subject). Example:

A. Determine the number of tests expected to be administered to economically disadvantaged students:

- i. # of economically disadvantaged students in ELA/math tested grades: 50
- ii. # of economically disadvantaged students in science tested grades: 20
- iii. Total # of tests to be administered to economically disadvantaged students:

$$50 \text{ ELA tests} + 50 \text{ math tests} + 20 \text{ science tests} = 120 \text{ expected tests}$$

B. Determine the number of tests taken by economically disadvantaged students:

- i. # of economically disadvantaged students tested in ELA: 50
- ii. # of economically disadvantaged students tested in math: 49
- iii. # of economically disadvantaged students tested in science: 17
- iv. Total # of tests taken by economically disadvantaged students:

$$50 \text{ ELA tests} + 49 \text{ math tests} + 17 \text{ science tests} = 116 \text{ tests taken}$$

C. Calculate the economically disadvantaged subgroup's participation rate:

$$116 \text{ tests taken} \div 120 \text{ expected tests} = 96.7\%$$

Progress towards targets categories

- *Current method:* Progress towards targets was initially reported in two categories (*meeting targets* and *partially meeting targets*) and moves to three categories starting with 2019 reporting (*meeting targets*, *partially meeting targets*, and *not meeting targets*).
- *Proposed change:* Name the second of the three categories *improving towards targets*, so the three categories to be reported in 2019 are: *meeting targets*, *improving towards targets*, and *not meeting targets*.

Using two years of data

- *Current method:* The 2018 district and school accountability results included only one year of data (2018).
- *Proposed change:* Include two years of data (2018 and 2019) when calculating accountability results for 2019. Data from both years would be weighted in the overall percentile and criterion-referenced

calculations, with more weight on data from the most recent year (e.g., 40 percent for 2018 and 60 percent for 2019).

Expanded advanced coursework list (high school only)

- *Current method:* One of the additional indicators in the Accountability System is the percentage of 11th and 12th graders completing advance coursework (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment courses, and other selected rigorous courses).
- *Proposed change:* Expand the list of advanced coursework to include Project Lead the Way (PLTW) courses.

Summary of ~~the Next-Generation~~ Massachusetts' District and School Accountability System

Note: This document highlights in yellow the proposed changes to the design of the Massachusetts District and School Accountability System, to facilitate public comment.

Introduction

In 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) began reporting accountability results under its new framework for district and school accountability and assistance, which was approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) in June 2018.

~~Since the approval of the Massachusetts state plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in September 2017, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has been refining plans for a new district and school accountability system. With the approval of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board), DESE will begin reporting results for all Massachusetts public schools and districts using this new system in fall 2018.~~

Background

State and federal laws require that DESE implement a system of district and school accountability. Prior to 2012, the Commonwealth's schools and districts were assessed based on both the state's five-level framework for accountability and assistance and the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. From 2012 to 2017, Massachusetts operated under a flexibility waiver from the U.S. Department of Education, which permitted us to implement a single, unified accountability system that maintained our state's high standards and expectations and met both federal and state requirements. The enactment of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 and the state's transition to a Next-Generation MCAS assessment gave us the opportunity to rethink the design of our accountability system.

System Highlights

The purpose of the accountability system is to provide clear, actionable information to families, community members, and the public about district and school performance. Additionally, the accountability system helps DESE to direct resources and assistance. The framework for ~~our~~ the new accountability system allows DESE to identify schools that require assistance or intervention, as well as schools that are demonstrating success. It maintains a single statewide accountability system that aligns with the Commonwealth's priorities while meeting federal education requirements. Highlights of the ~~new~~ system include:

- The inclusion of ~~additional~~ accountability indicators, ~~which will~~ that provide information about school performance and student opportunities beyond test scores;
- A focus on raising the performance of each district's or school's lowest performing students in addition to the performance of the district or school as a whole; and

- The ~~discontinuation of accountability and assistance levels (Levels 1 to 5), which will be replaced with use of~~ accountability categories that ~~better~~ define the progress that districts and schools are making and the type of support or assistance they may receive from DESE.

Accountability System Elements

A description of each of the key elements of the ~~new~~ Massachusetts district and school accountability system is included below.

Accountability Indicators

Annual performance determinations for districts and schools ~~will be~~ calculated using the following accountability indicators:

Indicator	Measure
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language arts (ELA) achievement • Mathematics achievement • Science achievement
Student Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP) • Mathematics mean SGP
High School Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four-year cohort graduation rate • Extended engagement rate (five-year cohort graduation rate plus the percentage of students from the cohort who are still enrolled) • Annual dropout rate
English Language Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress made by students towards attaining English language proficiency (percentage of students meeting annual targets calculated to attain English proficiency in six years)
Additional Indicator(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic absenteeism (percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership) • Percentage of 11th & 12th graders completing advanced coursework (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Project Lead the Way, dual enrollment courses, and other selected rigorous courses)

Weighting of Accountability Indicators

Federal law requires that substantial weight be given to the achievement, growth, English language proficiency, and graduation rate indicators, and that when taken together, these indicators should have much greater weight than the additional indicators.

~~In the most recent accountability system, achievement was weighted at 75 percent, and growth was weighted at 25 percent. However, the inclusion of new accountability indicators means that the percentages assigned to each indicator must change. Additionally, because not all districts and schools have an English learner subgroup, the weighting needs to remain flexible to accommodate districts and schools that have data for the English language proficiency indicator and those that do not.~~

~~Therefore, DESE proposes that the weighting of achievement and growth be thought of in terms of ratios instead of percentages. The most recent weighting, 75 percent achievement to 25 percent growth, is equivalent to a 3 to 1 ratio of achievement to growth. By using this approach, DESE can ensure that the ratio of achievement to growth remains consistent, but allow for flexibility in the actual percentages where necessary.~~

~~DESE recommends that the new accountability system maintain the achievement to growth ratio of 3 to 1, and apply the weightings shown in the tables below.~~

In June 2018, the Board approved DESE's proposal to use a 3 to 1 ratio of achievement to growth, consistent with the weightings shown in the tables below. By using this approach, DESE can ensure that the ration of achievement to growth remains consistent, but allow for flexibility in the actual percentages where necessary (e.g., to accommodate districts and schools that have data for the English language proficiency indicator and those that do not). For 2019 reporting, DESE intends to apply the same indicator weightings within the accountability calculations. Note that at the high school level, the high school completion indicators are considered part of achievement when calculating the ratio of achievement to growth.

Accountability Indicator Weightings – Non-High Schools

Indicator	Measures	Weighting (3:1)	
		With EL	No EL
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELA, math, & science achievement 	60%	67.5%
Student Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELA & math SGP 	20%	22.5%
English Language Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress made by students towards attaining English language proficiency 	10%	--
Additional Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic absenteeism 	10%	10%

Accountability Indicator Weightings – High Schools & Middle-High/K-12 Schools

Indicator	Measures	Weighting (3:1)	
		With EL	No EL
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA, math, & science achievement 	40%	47.5%
Student Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA & math SGP 	20%	22.5%
High School Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four-year cohort graduation rate • Extended engagement rate • Annual dropout rate 	20%	20%
English Language Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress made by students towards attaining English language proficiency 	10%	--
Additional Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic absenteeism • Advanced coursework completion 	10%	10%

Reported Measures

Accountability determinations ~~will~~ consist of a normative component and a criterion-referenced component, which ~~will be~~ used to classify districts and schools.

Normative Component

The normative component, or accountability percentile, measures the performance of all students in a school compared to other schools in the state. This measure is reported as a percentile, from 1 to 99, which is calculated using all available accountability indicators for a school. Schools are grouped together based on the statewide assessments that they administer: *non-high schools*, serving a combination of grades 3 through 8; *middle-high and K-12 schools*, serving one or more grades 3 through 8 and grade 10; and *high schools*, where the only tested grade is grade 10. Within each grouping, each school's performance on each indicator is ranked and weighted according to the weighting rules described above. The resulting accountability percentile provides information about how a school is doing compared to other schools administering similar assessments.

For the purposes of accountability reporting, the accountability percentile ~~will be~~ calculated only at the school level, for the all students group; it ~~will not be~~ calculated at the district level.

~~In the first year of reporting, the accountability percentile will be based only on data from 2018. However, after the first year of reporting, the accountability percentile will be based on multiple years of data. In the calculation of the 2019 accountability percentile, DESE uses two years of data (e.g., 2018 and 2019). Data from each year is weighted in the overall percentile calculation, placing more weight on data from the most recent year (e.g., 40 percent for 2018 and 60 percent for 2019).~~

Criterion-Referenced Component

The criterion-referenced component measures a district's or school's progress towards improvement targets. In the ~~new~~-accountability system, DESE ~~will use~~s data from all students in the district or school and the lowest performing students in the district or school to determine overall progress towards targets.

Lowest Performing Students Group

In an effort to control for student transiency, DESE ~~intends to measure~~s the performance of each district's and school's lowest performing students who have been enrolled for multiple years. Districts and schools ~~will still be~~are still responsible for the annual performance of all students, as aggregate and subgroup results ~~will include~~ all students enrolled in the school since the beginning of the school year. However, results for the lowest performing students group ~~will include~~ only those students who have been enrolled in the same district or school for two consecutive years.

If a district or school does not have test results for enough students to establish a reportable lowest performing students group, the district's or school's accountability determination ~~will be~~is based on the performance of all students.

Target-Setting

For each district or school as a whole and for the lowest performing students group, improvement targets ~~will be~~are set for each of the accountability indicators as shown in the table below.

Indicator	Non-high schools		High schools & middle/high/K-12 schools	
	All students	Lowest performing students	All students	Lowest performing students
ELA achievement	✓	✓	✓	✓
Math achievement	✓	✓	✓	✓
Science achievement	✓	-	✓	✓
ELA SGP	✓	✓	✓	✓
Math SGP	✓	✓	✓	✓
Four-year cohort graduation rate	-	-	✓	-
Extended engagement rate	-	-	✓	-
Annual dropout rate	-	-	✓	-
EL progress	✓	-	✓	-
Chronic absenteeism	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advanced coursework completion	-	-	✓	-

In ~~2018~~2019, achievement targets ~~will be~~have been set only for one year, using ~~2017~~2018 data as the baseline. ~~DESE will set conservative, yet reasonable achievement targets for 2018.~~ By grouping schools together based on historical school percentile ranges (e.g., schools with ~~2015~~2018 school accountability percentiles 1-25) and looking at changes made by only those schools in the group that demonstrated

improvement, DESE ~~will use~~ a statistical approach to apply the same expectation of improvement ~~on the new test scale to all~~ when setting 2019 targets for all schools within the group. Long-term targets will be set in the future, once there are multiple years of Next-Generation MCAS data in all tested grades to analyze.

Targets for ~~achievement on the legacy MCAS tests and for~~ the non-assessment indicators will be set by analyzing past trends using data that DESE has been collecting and reporting for several years.

Criterion-Referenced Component Calculation

Based on each target and actual performance, DESE ~~will assign~~ points for each indicator as shown in the table below:

Declined	No change	Improved	Met target	Exceeded target
0	1	2	3	4

For the district or school as a whole, the actual points earned and the total possible points will be reported for each indicator. The points earned will be combined, weighted according to the weightings described above, and calculated into a percentage of possible points for the all students group. The same will be done for the lowest performing students group. The two percentages of possible points values will be then ~~be~~ averaged, resulting in the district's or school's overall annual criterion-referenced target percentage. The goal is to earn 75 percent or higher, which represents meeting targets. An example of this annual calculation for a non-high school is displayed in the table below.

Indicator	All students (50%)			Lowest performing students (50%)		
	Points earned	Total possible points	Weight	Points earned	Total possible points	Weight
ELA scaled score	3	4	-	2	4	-
Math scaled score	2	4	-	2	4	-
Science achievement	2	4	-	-	-	-
Achievement total	7	12	60%	4	8	67.5%
ELA SGP	4	4	-	4	4	-
Math SGP	3	4	-	4	4	-
Growth total	7	8	20%	8	8	22.5%
EL progress	2	4	10%	-	-	-
Chronic absenteeism	3	4	10%	4	4	10%
Weighted total	6.1	9.6	-	4.9	7.6	-
Percentage of possible points	63.5%		-	64.5%		-
Annual C riterion-referenced target percentage	64%					

At the high school and district levels, similar calculations ~~will be~~ done using all available indicators (e.g., the indicators above, plus high school completion and advanced coursework completion) and the related indicator weightings.

In 2018, the criterion-referenced component will only include data from 2017 and 2018. However, after the first year of reporting, the criterion-referenced component will include multiple years of data. For 2019 reporting, the calculation of the criterion-referenced component includes multiple years of data. By combining the 2018 annual criterion-referenced target percentage (which measures performance from 2017 to 2018) and the 2019 annual criterion-referenced target percentage (which measures performance from 2018 to 2019), DESE will produce a single, final percentage that represents overall progress towards targets. Within this calculation, the annual percentages are weighted according to the same rules as the percentile, giving more weight to the most recent year (e.g., 40 percent for 2018 and 60 percent for 2019).-

Subgroup Reporting

While a district's or school's accountability determination ~~will be~~ primarily based on the performance of the district or school as a whole and its lowest performing students, DESE ~~will continue to also~~ reports accountability results at the subgroup level.

Accountability Subgroups

In addition to reporting results for each district or school as a whole, accountability results ~~will be~~ reported for the following 11 subgroups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; African American or Black; Hispanic or Latino; Multi-race, non-Hispanic or Latino; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; White; economically disadvantaged students; students with disabilities; current and former English learners (ELs); and high needs students (an unduplicated count of students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and/or ELs and former ELs). In order to report data for a subgroup, there must be results for at least 20 students.

Subgroup Results

For each subgroup in a district or school, performance against improvement targets ~~will be~~ reported using the criterion-referenced components described above. The overall accountability determination for a subgroup ~~will be~~ reported as the degree to which targets have been met.

In addition to the criterion-referenced component, each subgroup ~~will also receive~~ a subgroup percentile. The subgroup percentile measures the subgroup's relative standing compared to like subgroups in the same gradespan grouping statewide (e.g., by comparing results from the students with disabilities subgroup in one high school to all other students with disabilities subgroups in high schools statewide). The subgroup percentile is calculated using the same process as the normative accountability percentile described above: by ranking data from all available accountability indicators for each subgroup and combining them into a single, final percentile value, from 1 to 99. This allows DESE to identify

schools in which the performance of the school as a whole may be masking the performance of one or more low performing subgroups.

Assessment Participation

State and federal laws require high levels of student participation in statewide assessments. For each district, school, and subgroup, district and school as a whole, assessment participation rates will be calculated separately for ELA, mathematics, and science. At the subgroup level, assessment participation is calculated for the group as a whole, with all subjects combined (e.g., measuring the percentage of individual ELA, math, and science tests combined taken by the group). This approach minimizes the effect of a small number of non-participants in small subgroups.

Regardless of the reporting level (e.g. overall district or school rates or subgroup rates), participation will be calculated two ways for use in accountability determinations. First, the 2018-2019 participation rate for each subgroup in each subject will be calculated. If the actual 2018-2019 participation rate is lower than 95 percent for any group in any subject, that rate will be compared to the average of the most recent two years of assessment participation data rate for that the group and or subject. The higher of the two resulting rates will be factored into the district's or school's overall accountability determination. This two-step approach further minimizes the impact of a small number of non-participants in small subgroups.

Graduation Rates

Federal law requires states to identify any school that does not graduate two-thirds of its students. Therefore, any district or school in which the most recent four-year cohort graduation rate is below 66.7 percent will be identified as requiring assistance or intervention.

Categorization of Schools

Beginning in 2018, Overall school results will be reported in two categories: schools requiring assistance or intervention, and schools not requiring assistance or intervention.

Schools Requiring Assistance or Intervention

Schools requiring assistance or intervention will be identified as:

- In need of broad/comprehensive support, if they are designated underperforming or chronically underperforming, at the discretion of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, or
- In need of focused/targeted support, if they have not been identified as in need of broad/comprehensive support, and:

- Are among the lowest 10 percent of schools statewide, as measured by the accountability percentile,
- Have one or more low performing subgroups, as measured by the subgroup percentile,
- Have low graduation rates (below 66.7 percent), and/or
- Have low assessment participation (below 95 percent) in the aggregate or for one or more subgroups ~~in one or more subjects.~~

Schools Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention

A school that does not meet the criteria listed above ~~will be~~is identified as not requiring assistance or intervention. ~~DESE-The Department will~~reports results for these schools based on their overall performance against improvement targets, using the criterion-referenced component of the system. ~~In 2018~~2019, schools ~~will be~~are reported as either *meeting targets*, if they have an overall criterion-referenced target percentage of 75 percent or higher, ~~or partially meeting~~improving toward targets if they have an overall criterion-referenced target percentage ~~below 75 percent~~from 50 to 74 percent, or *not meeting targets* if they have an overall criterion-referenced target percentage below 50 percent. ~~Beginning in 2019, schools will be reported as meeting targets, partially meeting targets, or not meeting targets.~~

Schools of Recognition

A subset of schools that are classified as not requiring assistance or intervention ~~will be~~are recognized for their academic accomplishments. Schools of recognition ~~will be~~are identified for demonstrating success or improvement in achievement, growth, and other areas, based on criteria established by DESE.

The table below shows how schools ~~will be~~are placed into accountability categories.

Schools without required assistance or intervention (approximately 85%)				Schools requiring assistance or intervention (approximately 15%)	
Schools of recognition	Meeting targets	Partially meeting improving toward targets	Not meeting targets	Focused/ targeted support	Broad/ comprehensive support
Schools demonstrating high achievement, significant improvement, or high growth	Criterion-referenced target percentage 75-100	Criterion-referenced target percentage 50-74	Criterion-referenced target percentage 0-49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools with percentiles 1-10 not already identified for broad/comprehensive support Schools with low graduation rate Schools with low performing subgroups Schools with low participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underperforming schools Chronically underperforming schools

Categorization of Districts

Beginning in 2018, a district will no longer receive an accountability determination based on the performance of its lowest performing school. Instead, each district will be classified based on the results of the district as a whole and its lowest performing students, essentially treating the district like one large school. Overall district results will be reported in two categories: districts requiring assistance or intervention, and districts not requiring assistance or intervention.

Districts Requiring Assistance or Intervention

A district requiring assistance or intervention will be identified as:

- In need of broad/comprehensive support, if it is designated underperforming or chronically underperforming, at the discretion of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, or
- In need of focused/targeted support, if it has not been identified as in need of broad/comprehensive support, and has:
 - Low graduation rates (below 66.7 percent), and/or
 - Low assessment participation (below 95 percent) in the aggregate or for one or more subgroups in one or more subjects.

Districts Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention

A district that does not meet the criteria listed above ~~will be~~ identified as not requiring assistance or intervention. ~~DESE~~The Department ~~will report~~s results for these districts based on their overall performance against improvement targets, using the criterion-referenced component of the system. In 20182019, districts ~~will be~~ reported as either *meeting targets*, if they have an overall criterion-referenced target percentage of 75 percent or higher, ~~or partially meeting/improving toward targets~~ if they have an overall criterion-referenced target percentage ~~below 75~~from 50 to 74 percent, ~~or not meeting targets~~ if they have an overall criterion-referenced target percentage below 50 percent. Beginning in 2019, districts will be reported as *meeting targets*, *partially meeting targets*, or *not meeting targets*.

The table below shows how districts ~~will be~~ placed into accountability categories.

Districts without required assistance or intervention			Districts requiring assistance or intervention	
Meeting targets	Partially meeting/improving toward targets	Not meeting targets	Focused/targeted support	Broad/comprehensive support
Criterion-referenced target percentage 75-100	Criterion-referenced target percentage 50-74	Criterion-referenced target percentage 0-49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts with low graduation rate Districts with low participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underperforming districts Chronically underperforming districts

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Chronically Underperforming Schools: Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is a Chronically Underperforming School?

A: A "chronically underperforming" school is both low performing and not showing signs of substantial improvement over time.

"Chronically underperforming" refers to the placement of the school in the state's Framework [\[framework.docx\]](#) (framework.docx), which classifies schools based on their student performance. A school with low performance is designated chronically underperforming by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education because of significant concerns about the capacity of the school and district to make the changes necessary to raise student achievement at the school to acceptable performance levels.

The Commissioner is responsible for creating a turnaround plan for a chronically underperforming school. The Commissioner may either require the superintendent to implement the turnaround plan (which may include support from a targeted assistance team) or select a new leader, called a receiver, to operate the school and implement the turnaround plan. Whether the Commissioner directs the Superintendent or appoints a receiver, that person is held responsible for implementing and achieving the goals set out in the school's turnaround plan. The turnaround plan will be designed to put in place a comprehensive plan of action for significantly and rapidly improving the educational outcomes for all students in the school.

The authorities and flexibilities granted through the turnaround plan empower the Superintendent or the receiver to implement an ambitious and accelerated reform agenda so that students receive the quality of education that they need to meet the high standards that we hold for all students in the Commonwealth.

Q2: How are chronically underperforming schools identified? What data are used?

A: A school is designated chronically underperforming when it has failed to improve as required by the goals, benchmarks, or timetable of its prior turnaround plan, or when the school has failed to make significant improvement and when conditions in the district make it unlikely that the school will make significant improvement unless it is placed in chronically underperforming. Before a school is designated chronically underperforming by the Commissioner, a school must be designated underperforming (Level 4) in the state's Framework for School Accountability and Assistance and fail to improve significantly.

A chronically underperforming school is selected from among the state's Level 4 schools. The state's Level 4 schools are among the lowest performing 20% of schools in the Commonwealth based on an analysis of four-year trends in absolute achievement, student growth, graduation, and dropout rates, and improvement trends as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), as well as findings from monitoring site visits over the previous three years. Based on an analysis of these data, along with input from the school community, the Commissioner may declare the school as "chronically underperforming."

Q3: How many chronically underperforming schools are there currently?

A: Under the timelines provided in the statute, 2013 was the first time that the Commissioner has been able to designate chronically underperforming schools under statute. Currently, four schools have been designated chronically underperforming. The law states that not more than 4% of the total number of public schools may be designated as underperforming (Level 4) or chronically underperforming (Level 5) at any given time.

Q4: Who has the Commissioner selected to work with him on the chronically underperforming schools?

A: By law, the Commissioner can either ask the Superintendent of the district to lead a chronically underperforming school (which may include support from a targeted assistance team), or he can name a new leader, called a receiver, to lead the school. Whether the Superintendent or a receiver, the leader will report directly to the Commissioner regarding the school and will be accountable for improving education for every student in the school.

On January 29, 2014, the Commissioner announced the following decisions about who would work with him to develop and implement his turnaround plan for each of the four chronically underperforming schools.

Dever Elementary School (Boston): Blueprint Schools Network (<http://blueprintschools.org/>)

Holland Elementary School (Boston): UP Education Network (<http://upeducationnetwork.org/>)

Morgan Full Service Community School (Holyoke): Dr. Stephen Zrike, Receiver, Holyoke Public Schools (<http://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/>)

John A. Parker Elementary School (New Bedford): Dr. Pia Durkin, Superintendent, New Bedford Public Schools (<http://newbedfordschools.org/>)

Q5: How are stakeholders such as teachers, parents, students, and community members involved in decisions regarding a chronically

underperforming school?

A: Stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and community members are essential to turning around a chronically underperforming school. Prior to designating the schools chronically underperforming, the Commissioner held roundtable discussions at each of the four schools; stakeholders including parents, teachers, and community members participated in those conversations. Within 30 days following the chronically underperforming school designations, the Commissioner convened a Chronically Underperforming School Local Stakeholder Group at each of the four schools, with representation from teachers, parents, the surrounding community, social service organizations, and other representation as outlined in statute. All four groups submitted recommendations to the Commissioner for his consideration as he develops a turnaround plan for each chronically underperforming school. The Local Stakeholder Groups also had the opportunity to review the Commissioner's preliminary turnaround plan for each school and propose modifications.

Q6: What is the relationship of the district's Superintendent to a chronically underperforming school?

A: The Commissioner may require the Superintendent to implement the school's turnaround plan. If the Commissioner selects the Superintendent to implement the plan (potentially with support from a targeted assistance team), the Superintendent will be responsible for implementing all of the components of the plan and will be responsible for the school meeting all goals and targets set within the plan. The authority to make changes in the school comes through the turnaround plan.

>If the Commissioner selects an external receiver to operate the school and implement the turnaround plan, the receiver has managerial and operational control of the school, including the implementation of the turnaround plan. The receiver has all of the powers that the Superintendent previously had over the school. The Superintendent would still retain her/his managerial and operational authorities for the other schools in the district that have not been designated chronically underperforming. Whether he selects an external receiver or the Superintendent to implement his turnaround plan, that person or organization reports to the Commissioner regarding the work on the chronically underperforming school.

Q7: What is the relationship of the district's school committee to a chronically underperforming school?

A: The school committee still retains its customary role and authorities for the other schools in the district that have not been designated chronically underperforming. The Commissioner or external receiver, as applicable, presents a written report to the school committee on a quarterly basis to provide specific information about the progress being made on the implementation of a chronically underperforming school's turnaround plan, including an annual evaluation of the school's progress.

Q8: What happens to teachers in chronically underperforming schools?

A: Teachers and other educators are essential to turning around a chronically underperforming school. Some teachers currently working in chronically underperforming schools may be interested in contributing to the reforms that will be proposed by the chronically underperforming turnaround plans; however, this call to action may not be the right fit for every teacher in the building. State law establishes conditions by which all staff in the school may be required to reapply for positions in the school. (MGLc.69, § 1J (o)) Each chronically underperforming school's turnaround plan addresses working conditions at the school.

Q9: If the chronically underperforming school's receiver is named in the middle of the school year, do changes take effect immediately?

A: If a receiver is named mid-year, the district will continue to manage the chronically underperforming school's daily operations for the remainder of the school year. Staff currently working at a chronically underperforming school will continue in their jobs, and the school schedule will remain the same during this period. Students and staff should not expect significant changes in the remaining months of the school year. The receiver will use this time to prepare to assume full operational and managerial control of the school over the summer, and will manage all day-to-day operations at the school the next school year..

Q10: What is the state's role in chronically underperforming schools?

A: The Commissioner is responsible for convening the Local Stakeholder Group, creating the turnaround plan, and evaluating the school at least annually. In addition, the state's role in chronically underperforming schools includes defining exit criteria, including measurable annual goals tailored to each school; assessing school and district capacity to dramatically improve student achievement; monitoring the school's progress; and providing targeted assistance.

Q11: Where can I find the turnaround plan for a chronically underperforming school?

A: All chronically underperforming school turnaround plans are posted on DESE's chronically underperforming Schools website.

Q12: Will parents have the right to transfer their child to another school from a chronically underperforming school?

A: Parents with children in chronically underperforming schools maintain the same rights to request a transfer to another school in the district as they did prior to the chronically underperforming identification.

Q13: How does a school exit chronically underperforming status?

A: Upon the expiration of a turnaround plan for a chronically underperforming school, the Commissioner conducts a review of the school to determine whether the school has achieved the necessary academic and other progress required in the turnaround plan and whether the district has the capacity to continue making progress in improving the school's performance. If the school has made significant improvement, the Commissioner may determine that the school has improved sufficiently for the designation of chronically underperforming to be removed.

Q14: Where can I get more information about chronically underperforming schools?

A: For updates regarding DESE's work with the chronically underperforming schools, please see our Chronically Underperforming Schools website. For any questions or concerns about a chronically underperforming school, you may also email DESE at districtassist@doe.mass.edu (mailto:districtassist@doe.mass.edu).



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Chronically Underperforming Districts: Frequently Asked Questions

This addresses chronically under performing ("Level 5") **districts**. For questions about chronically under performing ("Level 5") **schools**, please view the Frequently Asked Questions: Chronically Underperforming Schools page. (</level5/schools/faq.html>)

- Background information regarding chronically underperforming districts
- Process following chronically underperforming district designation
- Chronically Underperforming district turnaround plan
- Roles for district stakeholders in a chronically underperforming district
- Information for teachers and staff working in a chronically underperforming district
- Information for parents and families in a chronically underperforming district
- Exiting chronically underperforming district status
- More information about chronically underperforming districts generally, and specific chronically underperforming districts

Background information regarding chronically underperforming districts

Q1: What is a Chronically Underperforming District?

A "chronically underperforming" district and is both low performing and not showing signs of substantial improvement over time. A district with low performance is designated chronically underperforming by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education because of significant concerns about the capacity of the district to make the changes necessary to raise student achievement to acceptable performance levels.

In a chronically underperforming district, the commissioner appoints a new leader, called a receiver, who can be granted authority up to and including the powers of the superintendent and school committee. The receiver reports directly to the commissioner and is held accountable for improving the education in every school in the district for the benefit of the students. (See Question 8 for what happens with a chronically underperforming school in a chronically underperforming district.)

The authorities and flexibilities of a chronically underperforming designation empower a receiver to initiate an ambitious and accelerated reform agenda so that students receive the quality of education that they need to meet the high standards that we hold for all students in the Commonwealth.

Q2: How are chronically underperforming districts identified? What data are used?

A district is eligible for designation as chronically underperforming if it scores in the lowest 10% of districts statewide. This analysis includes: district performance on state assessment over a four-year period based on Composite Performance Index (CPI) in English language arts; CPI in mathematics; percentage of students scoring in the "warning" or "failing" category on state assessment; and improvement in student academic achievement. Before placing a district in chronically underperforming, the Board considers the findings of the most recent district review report, along with quantitative indicators such as promotion, graduation and dropout rates. The Board may place an eligible district in chronically underperforming, if the commissioner so recommends, based on an analysis of these data. Copies of District Review Reports (</accountability/district-review/>).

Q3: How many chronically underperforming districts are there currently?

Currently, Lawrence Public Schools, Holyoke Public Schools, and the Southbridge Public Schools are the three chronically underperforming districts in the Commonwealth. Massachusetts law states that no more than 2.5% of the total number of districts can be designated chronically underperforming at any one time.

Q4: Why was Lawrence Public Schools designated a chronically underperforming district?

In designating Lawrence a chronically underperforming district in November 2011, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education considered many sources of data and the results of a comprehensive district review. Three-fourths of the schools in Lawrence experienced declines in student achievement from 2010 to 2011, and five of the 28 Lawrence schools were in Level 4 (the lowest

performing, least improving 20% of schools in the Commonwealth). At the time Lawrence was designated chronically underperforming, district-wide performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics was among the bottom 1% of all Massachusetts school districts; Lawrence had the third lowest math Composite Performance Index (CPI) and fourth lowest ELA CPI in the Commonwealth. At that time, less than one-half of Lawrence's students graduated from high school within four years, which was the lowest graduation rate of any district in the state. Finally, the district review described inconsistent governance and leadership and insufficiently coherent and comprehensive district systems that were standing in the way of district and school leaders and staff doing their best work on behalf of Lawrence students.

The Board designated the district as chronically underperforming because that pathway provides the greatest opportunity for transforming the district from one of the lowest performing in the state to one where students routinely experience strong educational outcomes.

Q5: Why was Holyoke Public Schools designated a chronically underperforming district?

In designating Holyoke a chronically underperforming district in April 2015, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education considered many sources of data and the results of a comprehensive district review. In spring 2015, student achievement and growth in the Holyoke Public Schools were among the lowest in the state overall and for student subgroups, including students with disabilities and English language learners. The highest performing school in the district was at the 21st percentile among schools in its grade span, and many were in the bottom 10% of schools statewide. From 2011 to 2014, student academic achievement and growth declined in many grades and subjects, contributing to a widening proficiency gap. In fall 2013, Commissioner Chester designated Morgan Full Service Community School, one of the district's K-8 schools, chronically underperforming due to its low performance and lack of improvement over several years. In addition to the achievement data, the district's on-time graduation rate was the lowest of any K-12 district in the state and the dropout rate was one of the highest.

With the chronically underperforming designation, the Board's goal is to ensure that students educated in the Holyoke Public Schools are prepared for success. The authorities and flexibilities of the chronically underperforming designation allow for an ambitious and accelerated education reform agenda on behalf of all of Holyoke's students and their families.

Q6: Why was the Southbridge Public Schools designated a chronically underperforming district?

In designating Southbridge a chronically underperforming district in January 2016, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education considered many sources of data and the results of a comprehensive district review. In the fall of 2015, student achievement and growth in the Southbridge Public Schools were among the lowest in the state overall and for student subgroups, including students with disabilities and English language learners. The highest performing school in the district was at the 8th percentile among schools in its grade span, and many were in the bottom 10 percent of schools statewide. In 2004, Southbridge was declared an underperforming (Level 4) district by the Board due to its low student performance over several years. From 2012 to 2015, student academic achievement and growth continued to decline in many grades and subjects and remained well below comparable state rates, contributing to a widening proficiency gap. In addition to the concerning achievement data, the district's out-of-school suspension and in-school suspension rates for all students in the district were almost three times the state rate in 2015. There have also been significant concerns regarding the leadership and governance of the district. Since 2011, seven individuals have served as superintendent, and there has been a similar level of turnover in other leadership positions in the district.

With the chronically underperforming designation, the Board's goal is to ensure that students educated in the Southbridge Public Schools are prepared for success. The authorities and flexibilities of the chronically underperforming designation allow for an ambitious and accelerated education reform agenda on behalf of all of Southbridge's students and their families.

Q7: When a district is designated chronically underperforming, do all of its schools also receive chronically underperforming designations?

A school's "Level" refers to the placement of the school in the state's Framework for School Accountability and Assistance, which classifies schools based on their student performance. Schools in a chronically underperforming district retain their school level classifications even though the district has been designated chronically underperforming.

Q8: What happens to a chronically underperforming school in a district that is also designated chronically underperforming?

If there is a chronically underperforming school in a district that is designated chronically underperforming, the school retains its chronically underperforming status. The commissioner will determine whether the chronically underperforming school requires its own receiver or whether the district receiver can incorporate that scope of work into the chronically underperforming district work. If the chronically underperforming school continues to be managed by its own receiver, the commissioner will ensure that the school's strategies and efforts are well aligned with the district's chronically underperforming turnaround plan. Because of the work already underway at the chronically underperforming school, the commissioner and the district receiver may choose to address that school differently in the chronically underperforming district turnaround plan.

Process following chronically underperforming district designation

Q9: Once a district has been designated chronically underperforming, what happens next?

The commissioner will name a new leader, called a receiver, to lead the chronically underperforming district. This receiver will report directly to the commissioner and will be accountable for improving education in every school in the district for the benefit of all students.

A chronically underperforming District Local Stakeholder Group will be convened with representation from teachers, parents, community representatives, and local health, workforce, early education, higher education, and others to provide recommendations for a chronically underperforming district turnaround plan. The receiver will begin analyzing the strengths and challenges of the district to identify strategies and next steps (e.g., instructional supports and staffing needs). The commissioner and receiver will develop a

chronically underperforming district turnaround plan that will include priorities and strategies to accelerate student achievement, as well as measurable benchmarks of progress that connect directly to rapid improvement of outcomes for students in all of the district's schools

Q10: How are receivers selected for chronically underperforming districts?

Under the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's regulations on underperforming schools and districts, the commissioner has responsibility for appointing a receiver for a chronically underperforming district. The commissioner may select an individual or non-profit entity that has successfully implemented turnaround efforts in other schools or districts.

Q11: What authority does a receiver have in a chronically underperforming District?

In January 2010, the Governor signed a law giving significant authority to the receiver of a chronically underperforming district. The chronically underperforming district receiver is appointed by the commissioner, and has the powers of the superintendent and the school committee. The law permits the receiver to make changes in district policies and practices through the turnaround plan.

Q12: Does DESE monitor the implementation of chronically underperforming district turnaround plans? How will progress be tracked and reported?

The receiver and the commissioner monitor the implementation of chronically underperforming district turnaround plans closely, to ensure that strategies are being implemented effectively and are yielding the desired results. Changes will be made as needed to ensure that these strategies are having the desired impact on students' learning. Each plan also contains Measurable Annual Goals, which can be found in Appendix B.

There is also a statutory requirement that the commissioner and the receiver provide a written report to the school committee on a quarterly basis regarding the progress being made on the implementation of the district's turnaround plan. In addition, each year the commissioner must evaluate the receiver's performance, to assess the plan's implementation and determine whether the district has met the annual goals contained in Appendix B of the turnaround plan.

The progress monitoring and reporting activities described above are in addition to the information that chronically underperforming districts provide regularly to their communities and stakeholders.

Chronically Underperforming district turnaround plan

Q13: Where can I find the turnaround plan for a chronically underperforming district?

The Lawrence chronically underperforming district turnaround plan is posted on Lawrence Public Schools' website (<https://www.lawrence.k12.ma.us/files/lps/LPSturnaround/level-5-lawrence-plan-2015.pdf>) and DESE's chronically underperforming district page (</level5/districts/level5districts.html>). The Holyoke chronically underperforming district turnaround plan is posted on Holyoke Public Schools' website (<http://hps.holyoke.ma.us/pdf/receiver/turnaroundplan.pdf>) and DESE's chronically underperforming district page (</level5/districts/level5districts.html>). When the Southbridge chronically underperforming district turnaround plan is created, it will be posted on the Southbridge Public Schools' website (<http://www.southbridge.k12.ma.us/>) and the DESE's chronically underperforming district page (</level5/districts/level5districts.html>).

Q14: Why doesn't the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education already have a plan when a district is designated chronically underperforming?

Massachusetts law provides for the development of a turnaround plan after a chronically underperforming district designation so that stakeholders can provide recommendations for the commissioner's and receiver's consideration as they develop the turnaround plan. The commissioner and receiver want stakeholders' ideas, suggestions, and input about current district initiatives that are working and those that require improvement.

Roles for district stakeholders in a chronically underperforming district

Q15: Do stakeholders (i.e., teachers, parents, and community members) have an opportunity to weigh in about what they think is and is not working in a chronically underperforming district?

After a chronically underperforming district designation, a Local Stakeholder Group will be convened; this group will have the opportunity to make recommendations to the commissioner and receiver for the district's chronically underperforming district turnaround plan. The stakeholder group includes representatives from the following groups: parents, teachers, district administrators, school committee members, teacher unions, social service agencies, the Department of Early Education and Care, the Department of Higher Education, and community members.

Q16: What role did the Local Stakeholder Groups' recommendations in Lawrence and Holyoke play in the development of their turnaround plans? How was it determined which recommendations would be included?

As part of the turnaround plan development process in each district, the commissioner and receiver reviewed and considered all of the recommendations submitted. The turnaround plans identify the many strategies that were informed by each specific Local Stakeholder Group recommendations. The commissioner and the receiver included recommended ideas and strategies that they determined would have the greatest likelihood of maximizing the rapid improvement of academic achievement of Lawrence's and Holyoke's students.

Q17: What happens to the school committee and superintendent in a chronically underperforming district?

In a chronically underperforming district, the receiver is granted powers up to and including the authority of the superintendent and school committee.

Information for teachers and staff working in a chronically underperforming district

Q18: What happens to teachers in a district following a chronically underperforming designation?

The commissioner and the receiver will engage the district's teachers in a collaborative way that values their expertise and commitment to students. However, this call to action may not be the right fit for every teacher in every building. The chronically underperforming district turnaround plan will address the working conditions in the district, which may include an expanded school day and school year, among other things.

Q19: Will there be changes in teaching and administrative staff in Southbridge?

The commissioner has said that there will not be mass firings of Southbridge staff. Southbridge's chronically underperforming district turnaround plan will outline the district's new priorities and path forward. Evaluating current district staff will be part of that process. Teachers and staff will have the opportunity to reflect on the new approach and determine if it is the right fit for them.

Q20: Why would an educator want to work in a chronically underperforming district?

DESE has learned from its experiences with Lawrence and Holyoke, and with chronically underperforming schools, that the challenges of working in a turnaround environment are strong motivation for joining the work. This includes staff who are new to education and those who have prior experience in other districts and schools. These educators are committed to making a difference for underserved students and families, and are excited to work with colleagues who share this commitment.

Q21: Do teachers and other staff in chronically underperforming districts retain their benefits, such as retirement benefits, when a district is designated chronically underperforming? Do they retain union membership and representation?

Teachers and other staff in chronically underperforming districts continue to be employees of those districts. As employees, they continue to receive the benefits offered to employees. They also continue to be members of the related unions, and receive representation from those unions.

Information for parents and families in a chronically underperforming district

Q22: How can I share information about my child's experience in Southbridge or ask questions about the receivership?

The receivership team welcomes the involvement of all community stakeholders, including parents, in improving Southbridge schools. The commissioner's DESE team will be hosting community meetings to learn more about what is working well and what needs improvement in the schools. The meeting details will be posted on the Southbridge Public Schools' website (<http://www.southbridge.k12.ma.us/>).

Q23: How can I share information about my child's experience in Holyoke or ask questions about the receivership?

Holyoke welcomes the involvement of all community members, especially students and families, in improving Holyoke schools. Please contact Receiver Zrike's office with information about programs you believe are working well and those that need improvement, or with any questions you have. The office can be reached by emailing szrike@hps.holyoke.ma.us (<mailto:szrike@hps.holyoke.ma.us>) or calling (413) 534-2005.

Q24: How can I share information about my child's experience in Lawrence or ask questions about the receivership?

Lawrence welcomes the involvement of all community members, especially students and families, in improving Lawrence schools. Please contact the district with questions or to provide information about what you think is working and what needs to improve. The Lawrence team can be reached by emailing Superintendent@lawrence.k12.ma.us (<mailto:Superintendent@lawrence.k12.ma.us>) or calling (978) 975-5905.

Exiting chronically underperforming district status

Q25: How does a district exit chronically underperforming status?

Upon the expiration of a turnaround plan for a chronically underperforming district, the commissioner conducts a review of the district to determine whether it has achieved the necessary academic and other progress required in the turnaround plan and whether the district has the capacity to continue making progress in improving performance. If the district has made significant improvement and demonstrated the capacity to continue making progress, the commissioner may determine that the district has improved sufficiently for the designation of chronically underperforming to be removed.

More information about chronically underperforming districts generally, and specific chronically underperforming districts

Q26: Where can I get more information about chronically underperforming districts in general?

For general information regarding DESE's work with chronically underperforming districts, please see the Chronically Underperforming Districts ([/level5/districts/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/level5/districts/)). For any questions or concerns about chronically underperforming districts in general, you may also email DESE at districtassist@doe.mass.edu (<mailto:districtassist@doe.mass.edu>).

Q27: Where can I get more information about the Lawrence chronically underperforming district receivership?

For more information regarding the work that Lawrence is doing under its chronically underperforming district receivership, please see the Lawrence Public Schools website (<https://www.lawrence.k12.ma.us/>). The Lawrence team can be reached by emailing Superintendent@lawrence.k12.ma.us (<mailto:Superintendent@lawrence.k12.ma.us>) or by calling (978) 975-5905.

Q28: Where can I get more information about the Holyoke chronically underperforming district receivership?

For more information specific to Holyoke's chronically underperforming district status, the Holyoke Public Schools website (<http://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/>) will continue to be the central location for all communications about the district. You can also reach Receiver Zrike's office by emailing szrike@hps.holyoke.ma.us (<mailto:receiver@hps.holyoke.ma.us>) or by calling (413) 534-2005.

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Section Five: Turnaround Plan Submission History
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Lawrence Level 5 District Turnaround Plan Renewed Plan

May 29, 2015



May 29, 2015

Students, parents, educators, staff, community members, and friends of the Lawrence Public Schools:

It was almost precisely three years ago that we wrote a letter similar to this one, introducing a plan for turning around Lawrence's schools and asking for your help in making this effort a success.

Today, following the path set forth in that plan and driven by the extraordinary commitment of our educators, families, and students, Lawrence is proud of the significant improvements it has made during the last three years of receivership. Student learning gains are improving, more students are achieving on grade level, the graduation rate has increased by double digits, and students are experiencing new opportunities in athletics and the arts that had for too long been out of reach.

Across the district, a spirit of optimism and collaboration has taken hold. Lawrence has pioneered a new district model called "open architecture" that empowers principals, teachers, and families to create school programs tailored to the needs of their students. With a leaner central office and an innovative teachers' collective bargaining agreement, we have pushed more resources to the school level and established new policies to support schools and promote continuous improvement.

System-wide, we have unified and raised expectations for teaching and learning through the district's Four Pillars framework:

- I. **Rigorous Standards:** Creating rigorous, standards-based curricula and assessments
- II. **High-quality Enrichment Opportunities:** Creating opportunities for students to participate in activities such as musical theater, step dancing, and athletics
- III. **Mindset:** Inculcating the value of hard work and a growth mindset in our students
- IV. **Critical Thinking:** Ensuring that higher-order thinking skills are embedded in classroom lessons

We should rightfully take pride in our collective work to date. But encouraging as our progress may be, the goal was never simply better schools. Our promise has always been—and must always be—a world class education for all of Lawrence's children, and there is still significant work ahead to achieve this reality. English language arts and math scores remain below state proficiency averages and many of our students still do not graduate high school. We cannot afford to mistake improved for acceptable.

It is with this understanding that we share the accompanying document, a three-year renewal of the May 2012 Lawrence Public Schools Turnaround Plan. Once again this plan will serve as our roadmap for the coming years, and we will continue to need your support to implement it effectively. As you read through this plan, we ask you to again consider the role you might play in achieving the goals it sets.

Our mission is as urgent as it was when receivership began three years ago. But working together, we are in a stronger position than ever to see it through.

Sincerely,

Signed by Receiver Riley

Jeffrey Riley
Superintendent/Receiver
Lawrence Public Schools

Signed by Commissioner Chester

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner
Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Executive Summary

In November 2011, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to place the Lawrence Public Schools (LPS) in state receivership, creating an unprecedented opportunity for the district to embark upon an effective, dramatic turnaround effort. Commissioner Mitchell Chester recommended receivership “because this pathway provides the greatest opportunity for transforming the district from one of the lowest performing in the state to one where students routinely experience strong educational outcomes.” The Commissioner further stated, “We could approach receivership with a goal of stabilizing the district and securing the most expeditious transition back to community control--- regardless of the quality and effectiveness of the educational program we leave behind. I am not inclined to recommend receivership because it is expedient. I expect that excellent schooling for Lawrence students will be realized only through substantial district reform that will require considerable time and effort.”

In May 2012, after consultation with local stakeholders, the Commissioner and the Receiver presented a turnaround plan with a clear vision to transform the school district. Now, in spring of 2015, we recognize that the Lawrence school district has achieved substantial progress, with much work still to be accomplished. To provide sufficient time for the strategies put in place to reach full and even implementation across all LPS schools and to improve student achievement district-wide, we are renewing this plan for an additional three-year term.

We remain committed to the essential strategies set forth in the 2012 Turnaround Plan, which harnessed the strengths of the district’s many talented educators, empowering them to implement school-level plans to strengthen student achievement. In this plan renewal, we have adjusted the content of the turnaround plan to reflect the progress to date in Lawrence and areas where the district may fine-tune or deepen its focus under a renewed plan.

In the renewed turnaround plan, the district will continue its implementation of an ambitious set of reforms with the following themes:

- *Providing great schools for all LPS students*
- *Combining the many assets of Lawrence with the best assets of the Commonwealth*
- *Empowering teachers, principals, parents, and the community to drive and lead improvement*
- *Using resources wisely for the greatest return on investment*
- *Implementing solutions with a sense of urgency*
- *Focusing on results*

Three years into the turnaround effort, LPS has begun a transformation into a system of empowered, high-performing schools, composed of both traditional schools and schools led by proven partner organizations. New district systems have been developed that support school improvement efforts, empower teacher and administrator leadership, and ensure accountability for results. Ultimately, these systems have coalesced into a new district operating model in Lawrence called “open architecture.” Open architecture enables individual school teams to design their own school models with significant autonomy, while receiving guidance and support from the central office and external partner organizations. In addition, all schools within the district exist on a level playing field as neighborhood schools with unionized employees and follow a common set of baseline district policies.

To accompany this vision, the district established ambitious goals for improvement in the areas of student academic growth, proficiency in core subjects, and high school graduation, among others. Over the last three years, the district has made significant progress on many of the goals set forth in the 2012 plan. Specifically, the district has:

- Exceeded the first year turnaround plan goal to double the number of schools with a median SGP above 50 on both ELA and math MCAS. LPS more than doubled this number in the first year.
- Increased the median SGP in ELA from 43 to 52 and the median SGP in Math from 40 to 57 after two years of MCAS results (2013 and 2014).
- Achieved a 13 percentage point increase in MCAS math proficiency from 2011-2014 (from 28 percent to 41 percent), a 3 percentage point increase in ELA proficiency (from 41 percent to 44 percent), and an 8 percentage point increase in science proficiency (from 13 percent to 21 percent), after three years of results.
- Achieved a 14.6 percentage point increase in the 4-year cohort graduation rate (from 52.3 percent in 2011 to 66.9 percent in 2014), and a 4 percentage point decrease in the annual dropout rate (from 8.6 percent to 4.6 percent), after three years of results.

The district will exit receivership once gains are sufficient and policies, practices, and structures have been institutionalized to ensure sustainable results. Based on the data from the past three years, the district is improving, but has not yet made sufficient growth to ensure sustainable change. While most core indicators have improved—and many have increased significantly—the district has not sufficiently improved its MCAS proficiency or graduation rates to warrant an exit from receivership. While LPS has climbed to among the top-ranked Gateway Cities for math and ELA median SGP, MCAS proficiency rates in these subjects remain low and graduation rates remain below target levels.

In school year 2017-2018, the Commissioner and the Receiver will begin to meet with Lawrence city officials to review the district's performance and discuss potential pathways for exiting receivership upon the expiration of the renewed plan. This discussion will include strategies and options for ensuring that new programs and policies implemented as part of the district turnaround are fully preserved post receivership. Exit from receivership will remain conditional upon satisfying the requirements of the receivership statute and regulations, including that the district has achieved sufficient academic progress and has the capacity to continue making progress going forward.

To achieve its vision and goals, LPS will continue its progress in implementing four main strategies:

- Strategy 1: Expanded time, strategic use of data, and high expectations for academic achievement
- Strategy 2: Recruitment, retention, and cultivation of great people and proven partners
- Strategy 3: Strengthened support and engagement for students beyond academics
- Strategy 4: Increased school autonomy coupled with accountability for improved student academic success

In addition, a key principle of the 2012 Turnaround Plan was a commitment to the effective use of resources, given the district's status as a high need and low wealth district. *The effective use of resources to maximize student achievement is the principle on which the district's strategies will continue to be based.*

As we have implemented this plan over the last three years, we have monitored our results and learned from our experiences. While we have made adjustments along the way, where appropriate, these changes remain consistent with the priorities, strategies, and goals outlined in the 2012 Turnaround Plan.

Note: *This document presents an overarching plan for ensuring the success of all Lawrence Public Schools' students. By design, the document provides a big-picture description of goals and strategies, and not a detailed list of action steps and timetables. Each school in the district will continue to work with the Receiver to produce and publish an individualized annual school improvement plan. These plans will translate the broad strategies of the district plan into concrete action steps and measures of progress for each school. The school plans will help students, parents, educators, staff, and community members to*

understand the specific changes they can expect to see in their neighborhood schools. School plans can be found on Lawrence's website: www.lawrence.k12.ma.us.

Summary of Key Issues and Strategic Objectives

Background (Before Receivership)

In November 2011, on the recommendation of Commissioner Chester, the Board of Education voted to place LPS in state receivership, creating an unprecedented opportunity for the district to embark upon a dramatic turnaround effort. Under state receivership, the governance of the district has been streamlined, with all operational powers of the superintendent and the Lawrence School Committee held by the Receiver, Jeffrey Riley, who was appointed by Commissioner Chester in January 2012.

Findings that led to the district entering receivership

The need for reform was underscored by the student outcome data and other relevant district data collected and analyzed as part of ESE's 2011 District Review and for school and district redesign purposes. Some of the key findings that led to the district entering receivership included:

- **Promotion and graduation:** LPS had a four-year graduation rate of 52percent in the 2010-2011 school year. The graduation rate was 31 percentage points below the state average; 24percent of 9th graders were not promoted to 10th grade, more than 3 times the state average; and 8.6percent of LPS students dropped out each year. The district's retention rate, the percentage of students repeating the grade in which they were enrolled the previous year, was 5.2percent, in comparison with a state average of 2.1 percent.
- **Low baseline of performance:** Of 24 Gateway City districts identified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Lawrence ranked 22nd in academic achievement on MCAS across all grades in both math and English language arts (ELA). The district's math and ELA MCAS proficiency, as well as its four-year graduation rate, ranked in the bottom five districts in the state. In 2011, less than 30percent of tested students were proficient in math MCAS and only 41percent of students were proficient in ELA MCAS.
- **Downward trends:** Three quarters of LPS schools experienced declines in MCAS proficiency in 2010-2011. The median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) in math and ELA were 39 and 45, respectively, indicating that LPS students' growth was well below those of like students across the Commonwealth in 2011. Median SGP had not risen above 50 district-wide in math or ELA in the past four years.
- **Achievement gap with the state:** In 2011, LPS MCAS proficiency rates were on average 28 percentage points lower than the state in ELA and 29 points lower in math. Troubling gaps also persisted among LPS subgroups. For example, limited English proficient students underperformed state averages by eleven percentage points in both math and ELA MCAS proficiency. For students with disabilities, the gaps with the state in MCAS proficiency rates were 19 percentage points in ELA and 15 percentage points in math.
- **Accountability status:** Five schools had been deemed "underperforming" (Level 4) by the Commonwealth and more schools were in danger of being identified Level 4 in future years.

Challenges

The District Review examined the factors impeding the district's ability to increase student achievement. The District Review and the Receiver's own analysis identified the following challenges in LPS at the start of receivership:

- **Inconsistent quality of instruction:** At its core, the achievement gaps and lack of growth stemmed from a lack of effective instruction in many classrooms across the district. The Receiver's observations confirmed what the ESE district review had found: the quality of teaching and school leadership varied greatly and the bar had been set too low.
- **Lack of stable leadership:** Until the Receiver was appointed in January 2012, the district had been without a permanent superintendent since the previous superintendent was granted medical leave in April 2009. An interim superintendent served during much of that time without a long term agreement or contract.
- **Low expectations:** The district had not operated with the sense of urgency required to dramatically turn around student achievement. Ineffective teachers had been allowed to remain in the classroom, teacher evaluations had not been conducted with regularity or rigor, and expectations for students were persistently low.
- **Talent and capacity:** LPS faced a lack of experienced leadership at the school level. At the classroom level, the teacher evaluation system typically had been approached as a pro forma exercise rather than as a system to identify and improve talent.
- **Insufficient data access and use:** Teachers, school leaders, and district leaders have to use data to improve instruction. However, assessment data appeared to be unavailable for some students. Many teachers did not have access to necessary data or training to analyze the data to improve instruction.
- **Supportive programming:** Many LPS students face considerable challenges and LPS lacked programs to help students overcome them. For example, LPS lacked sufficient ELL programming, licensed personnel, and training to help many of its students reach needed English skill levels. Further, LPS had not provided sufficient wraparound services to address the many non-academic barriers to learning facing LPS students.

Key Themes

With the implementation of the turnaround plan, the district embarked on an aggressive set of reforms with the following themes, which remain key guiding principles of the turnaround effort.

- ***Provide great schools for LPS students:*** Focus on schools as the unit of change aiming to build a system of highly autonomous, high-performing neighborhood schools with essential support from the district.
- ***Combine the many assets of Lawrence with the best assets of the Commonwealth:*** Build on excellence in Lawrence and add top people and partners from across Massachusetts.
- ***Empower teachers, principals, parents, and the community:*** Enable educators, parents, and community members to drive and lead school-level improvement.
- ***Use resources wisely:*** Examine current investments to ensure the greatest return.
- ***Implement solutions with a sense of urgency:*** Begin immediately and move with speed.
- ***Focus on results:*** Focus on results rather than processes and adjust the plan based on results.

Vision

Ultimately, the vision for the Lawrence Public Schools is to provide all students with a rich, high-quality education that mirrors the suburban experience and closes the achievement gap between our students and their peers across the Commonwealth.

Over three years, the Receiver has deepened the original vision for improved student outcomes by implementing the following components to transform the school system:

- Developing a common definition of high-quality instruction
- Re-imagining the urban school district under the open architecture model
- Building sustained collaboration with the Lawrence community

To ensure that all school leaders and educators are working toward a common definition of high-quality instruction, LPS leadership has encouraged each school to focus on the Four Pillars of teaching and learning: developing rigorous standards-based curricula and assessments; creating high-quality enrichment opportunities for students; inculcating the value of hard work and a growth mindset in students; and ensuring that critical thinking is embedded in classroom lessons.

The original principle of school autonomy set forth in the 2012 Turnaround Plan has developed into a model for managing the school district called “open architecture.” Under open architecture, district and union leadership have embraced a model that shifts the power to the schools, where principals and teacher leadership teams design school programs to best meet their students’ needs. Each school team proposes its own curriculum, calendar, and professional development, while school leaders have budget and hiring autonomy.

Under open architecture, the central office assumes a support role, managing operational tasks so that school leaders can focus on teaching and learning. In addition, the district establishes a common set of baseline policies to ensure a fair, supportive system for LPS students, families, and staff. All district schools—including those managed by education management organizations—are neighborhood-based, staffed by unionized employees, and follow the baseline district policies, creating a level playing field for all schools across the district.

While LPS has undertaken rapid change in a short amount of time, the district has pursued system changes in partnership with local leaders and stakeholders. The Receiver meets regularly with the parent teacher organization presidents’ council, a roundtable of local non-profits, the school committee, and the mayor. Community organizations work closely with our schools in a variety of capacities, including as key expanded learning time partners. After negotiating an innovative collective bargaining agreement, LPS leadership and the Lawrence Teachers Union (LTU) have been working in partnership on efforts to increase teacher voice and raise student achievement. Individual teachers are engaged in a variety of ways, from the district’s Teacher Leader Cabinet to teacher leadership teams at each school.

Goals

As we work to fully deliver on the district's vision, LPS has re-established aggressive goals for improvement.* Within the next three years, the district aims to:

- Achieve a district-wide median SGP of at least 55 in ELA and math
- Increase district proficiency rates to exceed 50 percent in both ELA and math (increasing at least 10 percentage points in math and 7 percentage points in ELA)
- Add three schools achieving proficiency rates at or above the state average for ELA (increasing from zero to three), and double the number of schools achieving at or above the state average for math (increasing from three to six)
- Increase the district's four-year graduation rate to 80 percent (a 13-percentage point increase from current rate)

*Note that goals are subject to change based on PARCC implementation decisions and timelines.

Priority Strategies

A key principle of the 2012 Turnaround Plan was a commitment to the effective use of resources, given the district's status as a high need and low wealth district. LPS has committed to effective resource use by curtailing expenditures that do not demonstrate a relationship to strong student learning, ensuring that the investment in salaries and employee benefits were resulting in increased student learning, and providing sufficient time for student instruction and staff development. LPS has embraced the principle of effective resource use, while allowing for differentiated approaches to meet individual student needs. To this end, the district maximized funding at the school level by reducing central office staff and budget, provided all schools with significant input over their budgets, and adopted a transparent per-pupil funding model for schools. *The effective use of resources to maximize student achievement is the principle on which the district's strategies will continue to be based.*

To achieve its vision and goals, the district has continued to implement four main strategies that are aligned with the recommendations of the Level 5 Local Stakeholder Group that were submitted in spring 2012. Three of these strategies focused on school-level actions, while one strategy focused on district actions that support school improvement. These strategies were intensively rolled out in all schools, with a particular emphasis on Level 4 schools, as well as any additional schools in danger of declining into Level 4 status. Implementing these strategies also began to reframe our expectations of LPS staff.

- **Strategy 1: Time, Data, and Expectations (School levers)**

We have increased instructional time for our students through an expanded school day in grades 1-8, a robust Acceleration Academies program serving thousands of students over February and April vacations, and Saturday programs at a number of schools. Through the expanded school day, students are receiving additional opportunities for academic intervention and acceleration, and new enrichment programs, while teachers have additional time to collaborate. As part of the work underway to redesign Lawrence High School, all 9th grade students will start school early as part of an expanded year program in fall 2015. In the coming years, LPS will explore additional opportunities for expanded learning time at the high school level.

In addition to adding time, we have enhanced the quality of instructional time by using data to inform and improve instruction. At the majority of LPS schools, data cycles are in place and data consistently frames discussions about expectations for students' learning and teachers' instructional practices. To better support the use of data in schools in future years, LPS will

invest in an integrated student data platform to enable the design of customized, user-friendly data reports at the school and district levels.

While an emphasis on time, data, and expectations is now in place in most LPS schools, in the next phase we will ensure that these levers are implemented effectively in all schools across the district. The Receiver annually reviews and approves each school's plan for the allocation of instructional time as a core lever for continuous improvement. School plans also include annual priorities to ensure that each school is constantly seeking a higher standard for excellence, and holding students and staff to high expectations based on data. A core focus of our continued efforts to improve in these areas will be on Lawrence High School, as part of the high school redesign process.

- **Strategy 2: People and Partners (School levers)**

We have defined the district's talent base as both the people we employ and the organizations with which we partner. Aggressive recruiting, rewarding top talent, comprehensive and rigorous evaluation, and greater autonomy, flexibility, and professional expectations have helped us to cultivate a strong talent base, including proven partners hired to accelerate turnaround efforts. In the coming years, the district intends to build on early initiatives in these areas by implementing systems to ensure that LPS consistently and effectively recruits, retains, and expands the reach of its top talent.

As we complete our third year of turnaround work, LPS has established partnerships with five school management organizations, including The Community Group, UP Education Network, Phoenix Academy, the American Federation of Teachers/Lawrence Teachers Union, and Lawrence Family Development Education Fund. Community agencies have also played a significant role as providers of enrichment programming within the expanded day in LPS schools, and non-profits have supported schools with professional development in data, assessment, curriculum, and instruction. In future years, the district intends to enhance efforts to ensure the full integration of these school partners into the fabric of LPS, and ensure that each partner is supported to be successful in maximizing student outcomes. In addition, LPS will seek additional support partners in areas of need, such as those who can support critical thinking and STEM initiatives in our schools.

To ensure empowerment of school-level staff in decision-making, LPS and LTU established teacher leadership teams at each school beginning in school year 2014-2015. Such distributed leadership is new for many educators and administrators in LPS, and much work remains to ensure that school-level teams are supported to function effectively.

In 2013, the district created the Redesign Office to improve the efficiency, quality, and delivery of service from the central office to schools. This office has served as the lead design and implementation team for turnaround plan strategies. The Redesign Office continues to work on the refinement of the open architecture model, district-wide systems, and school improvement initiatives.

- **Strategy 3: Support and Engagement (School levers)**

To ensure that students are physically and mentally ready to learn during instructional time requires support beyond core academics. Schools can provide some of this needed social and emotional support, but increased involvement from parents and the community is also pivotal. In school year 2013-2014, the district opened a Family Resource Center for parents to enroll

students and to receive information on district and community resources. A district-wide parent teachers' organization (PTO) presidents' council and a community partners group also meet regularly with district leadership; at the school level, PTOs continue to work to engage families. In the coming years, LPS will continue working to increase community awareness of the district's turnaround strategies, and to develop more avenues for family and community involvement across the district.

The high-needs populations of English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities require additional targeted support. This means receiving instruction from the most effective teachers in sheltered English instruction (SEI) for ELLs and appropriately inclusive environments for students with disabilities. To ensure that ELLs are effectively supported in the regular education classroom, LPS has offered its educators SEI endorsement courses and additional training each year. The district has maintained its Melmark partnership to support special educators to develop high-quality programs, including the use of technology, for students on the autism spectrum. Although the district has made strides in this work, LPS schools must continue to develop tiered supports through programs such as RTI, and the district must develop better systems to effectively manage its special education programs and services.

The district has added enrichment opportunities such as athletics, arts, and other activities in order to foster student engagement, with many schools adopting new enrichment programs as part of their annual school plans. In future years, the district aims to build additional enrichment programs, with the goal of ensuring access to enrichment from a student's entry into LPS through 12th grade. In addition, many schools currently rely heavily on special grants through Twenty-First Century Learning Communities to fund enrichment programs; therefore, ensuring sustainability of these programs is a key area of focus.

In addition, LPS's alternative high school programs have re-engaged and motivated dropouts and other at-risk young adults to graduate from high school and prepare for college. The planned redesign of Lawrence High School, which aims to create a more structured learning environment in the early high school years, will foster increased student engagement for all LPS high school students.

- **Strategy 4: Autonomy and Accountability** (District levers)

Under the open architecture model, LPS has embraced increased autonomy for schools (for example in staffing, resource allocation, operations, and program delivery), accompanied by increased support and accountability. Principals have the authority to operate and staff their school sites based on the best interests of students in the school.

With strong school leadership, along with district investment in new tools and coaching, many school teams Pre-K-8 have implemented positive changes with new autonomies. Building on the structures and systems that supported the Level 4 high schools as well as successful practices from the K-8 schools, the district is undertaking a redesign of the Lawrence High School campus to dramatically improve the high school graduation rate and ensure that LPS high school students are college and career ready. As the first step of a phased planning process, the district will implement a 9th Grade Academy in fall 2015, featuring increased academic expectations; a cohort model for personalized learning; specialized supports for students with disabilities, ELL newcomers, and at-risk students; and

new systems for student support and engagement. Planning is underway for the redesign of the remaining grades at LHS, with the next phase of the plan set to launch in fall 2016.

Currently, individual schools require a continuum of support; some operate with minimal district oversight while others still require a significant level of assistance. Particularly at the high school level, the district will continue to provide considerable central support in critical functions to accelerate the redesign process. In the coming years, the district will build capacity at every school for increasingly self-directed programs, including a commitment to the process of continuous improvement. LPS will continue to evolve the functions of central office as schools require less support and new systems come online to streamline operational processes.

Implementation

In order to effectively implement these strategies, the district has followed a phased implementation approach.

- **Immediate Actions** (Phase 1: **Completed**): Before the start of the 2012-2013 school year, the district laid the groundwork for implementation of the turnaround plan. This involved hiring and placing the appropriate people and partners into key leadership and teaching roles, securing and deploying resources, and establishing the basic frameworks for school autonomy and accountability.
- **Establishing Conditions** (Phase 2: **Completed**): Over the three years that followed, the district was tasked with building strong central functions to drive key turnaround strategies at all schools including data, time, culture, people and partnerships. The district has made significant progress in this area, establishing a school planning process where principals and teacher leadership teams are empowered to propose new initiatives to support student achievement. The district has recruited strong partners to the district and established its open architecture model, which set up a system of “guided autonomy” for schools (providing significant autonomies to schools, with additional support and guidance to ensure that schools use autonomies wisely). The district also continues to expand its ability to measure progress and hold schools accountable for results. During this phase, it was expected that individual schools would be granted significant autonomies, while receiving differentiated levels of support based on school needs.
- **Empowering Schools** (Phase 3: **In process**): After establishing the initial conditions and capacity for improvement, the central office will continue to narrow and refine its purpose, focusing on delivering high-quality services and supports to schools. These services are now primarily operational in nature, with most academic functions now located at the school level. A small teaching and learning team remains in the central office, focused on areas such as providing academic coaching to schools, establishing new enrichment programs, providing planning support for acceleration academies, and implementing educator leadership initiatives. The district Redesign Office continues to develop and improve systems for enhancing school autonomy and support, to seek and pilot new initiatives and partnerships for the district and its schools, and to ensure that the district remains on target to achieve its performance goals.

Since 2012, LPS has focused intensively on improving the performance of its Level 4 schools. The district implemented innovative plans for transforming these schools, including:

- **Spark Academy** (formerly South Lawrence East Middle School) received a School Redesign Grant (SRG) under the federal *transformation* model. A new principal assumed leadership of the 5th grade in 2012-13 with a turnaround plan based on physical activity and additional learning time, and the school will complete its transformation in fall 2015. While Spark was originally slated to operate as a grades 5-8 middle school, the district will adjust its grade span to a grades 6-8 middle school beginning in school year 2015-2016 to enable the physical activity model to be effectively implemented in its current facility.
- **UP Academy Leonard** (formerly Leonard Middle School) received an SRG under the federal *restart* model. The district entered into an agreement with UP Education Network, a proven school turnaround operator, to manage school, beginning with grade 6 in school year 2012-2013. UP Education Network now manages all grades at UP Academy Leonard, a middle school that includes grades 6-8.
- **Lawrence High School** (International High School and Business Management & Finance High School) received SRG funding under the federal *transformation* model. These schools worked with a proven partner, the MATCH Foundation, to provide intensive tutoring support as a part of the school's redesign plan. In school year 2014-2015, MATCH supported high school leadership to transition the program to in-house tutoring in all of the schools across Lawrence High School, primarily in math. The district will continue to examine the tutoring program and other specialized academic interventions as we proceed with plans for the larger Lawrence High School redesign.
- **Community Day Arlington** (formerly Arlington Elementary School) changed from the federal *transformation* to the federal *restart* model in its second year of SRG redesign work. A proven partner, The Community Group, began managing the school over a two year period, beginning K-1 in school year 2012-2013 and expanding through grade 4 in school year 2013-2014.

In addition, the district developed a new alternative high school to improve the high school graduation rate and ensure LPS students gain the knowledge and skills they need to be college and career ready.

- **Phoenix Academy Lawrence** created an additional alternative high school option for Lawrence students. The district entered into an agreement with the Phoenix Foundation, a proven alternative high school operator in Chelsea, to lead this new school. Phoenix has enrolled between 150 -190 students each year and supported them as they prepare to matriculate into post-secondary education and/or be prepared for work after high school.

In addition to the school transformation efforts listed above, the Oliver School was placed into Level 4 status in fall 2012. In devising the turnaround plan for this school, which served grades 1-8, the Receiver divided the school into an elementary school serving grades 1-5 and a middle school serving grades 6-8.

- **Oliver Partnership School (grades 1-5)** received an SRG under the federal *transformation* model. The district entered into a partnership with the Lawrence Teachers Union/American Federation of Teachers to create a new school opening in fall 2013 that would feature a collaborative decision-making model, wraparound services, and strong parent engagement and social/emotional supports for students, while ensuring a rigorous academic education.
- **UP Academy Oliver (grades 6-8)** received an SRG under the federal *restart* model. The district entered into an agreement with UP Education Network to begin to manage the school over a period of two years, beginning with grade 6 in school year 2013-2014. UP Education Network now manages all grades at UP Academy Oliver.

In addition, in fall 2014, the Receiver established a new early childhood center that provides a two-year, full-day kindergarten program.

- **Lawrence Family Public Academy**, a new school managed by the Lawrence Family Development Education Fund, was established to offer a full-day kindergarten program for both four- and five-year-olds in the Tower Hill neighborhood. This new school also provides additional kindergarten enrollment capacity to support the district's growing enrollment.

As we have implemented this plan over the last three years, we have monitored our results and learned from our experiences. As expected, we made adjustments as needed to ensure improvements in student learning while remaining true to the strategies and goals outlined in the plan.

Statutory Basis for the Implementation of the Turnaround Plan

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, §1K, the Commissioner and the Receiver must create a turnaround plan intended to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in the district. The Commissioner and the Receiver will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the renewed turnaround plan. Among other things, through the turnaround plan, the Commissioner and the Receiver may: reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the district; provide funds to increase the salary of an administrator or teacher working in an underperforming school in order to attract or retain highly-qualified administrators or teachers, or to reward administrators or teachers who work in chronically underperforming districts that have achieved the annual goals in the turnaround plan; expand the school day or school year or both of schools in the district; limit, suspend or change one or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement in the district; limit, suspend, or change one or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices relate to the underperforming schools in the district; provide job-embedded professional development for teachers in the district; provide increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction; and establish steps to assure a continuum of high-expertise teachers by aligning hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture, and organizational structure with the common core of professional knowledge and skill.

The Receiver has settled three of the district's ten collective bargaining agreements that expired in 2010 or 2011 and has settled a collective bargaining agreement with a newly recognized bargaining unit. The terms outlined in Appendix A are necessary to the successful implementation of the turnaround plan and reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, and working rules and to any practices or policies pursuant to the expired collective bargaining agreements. These terms took effect July 1, 2012, and have been included in any collective bargaining agreements negotiated subsequently. The Receiver provided a summary of these changes to each union leader after the release of the turnaround plan. The Commissioner and the Receiver reserve the right to make additional changes to collective bargaining agreements as needed. Nothing contained in the turnaround plan or the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as they are provided for under G.L. c.69, §1K.

The renewed turnaround plan is authorized for a period of three years. Under G.L. c.69, §1K (j), if a district has not improved sufficiently to remove the designation of the district as chronically underperforming, the Commissioner may (1) jointly determine subsequent annual goals for each component of the turnaround plan with the receiver and renew the turnaround plan for an additional period of not more than three years; or (2) create a new turnaround plan, consistent with the

requirements of the general law. The Commissioner and the Receiver may develop additional components of the plan or amend the plan, as appropriate.

Overview of Strategic Objectives and Initiatives

The updated descriptions of related activities in bold text below indicate areas in which LPS has made progress to date, and include new activities to continue a trajectory of improvement.

Strategic Objective 1: Expectations, Time, and Data	
Rationale	In order to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in Lawrence, it is imperative that we develop a culture of high expectations for both students and adults. In order to reach greater levels of achievement, students must have increased quality instructional time. A menu of time strategies to improve student achievement including changes in the school day, school year, and/or school calendar must be available to school leaders to bring about this change. In order to attract and retain the highest quality teachers in Lawrence, it will be essential to compensate staff based on performance, individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth. Increasing the use of assessment data to improve instruction will be a necessary tool in this strategic objective.
Initiatives	Description of related activities
1a. EXPECTATIONS: Build a culture of high expectations for students and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Raise expectations for rigor:</u> The district will establish a clear definition of effective and rigorous instruction and hold all educators to the standard. This standard will be set through the educator evaluation system, as well as through research-based professional development on effective teaching. Similarly, there will be high performance expectations for all of the district's staff. Throughout the Level 4 schools, the district will apply the statutory "good cause" standard for dismissal to teachers with professional teacher status as well as to all represented district staff members that have completed their probationary period. 2015 update: The educator evaluation system and other staff performance reviews have established higher expectations for school and district staff. Educators also receive improved classroom coaching from administrators and peers, including more frequent and higher-quality observation and feedback cycles. In future years, LPS will continue to refine these systems and ensure effective implementation across all schools. • <u>Set aggressive goals:</u> Teachers, administrators, and all other district staff will set ambitious goals for themselves that they will be held accountable for meeting. Teachers will work with their students to help them craft, and to hold them accountable for achieving, similarly ambitious goals for their own learning. LPS aims to achieve at levels that are even higher than the ambitious state targets for closing the proficiency gap. 2015 update: Schools have largely adopted an improvement culture of setting goals, monitoring progress, and adjusting these goals as needed each year. In future years, in addition to ensuring strong goal-setting processes across all schools, LPS will establish a consistent and rigorous process of annual goal-setting and monitoring across central office departments. • <u>Performance-based compensation system:</u> The district will develop and implement a compensation system that promotes and supports effective performance. 2015 update: The LPS teacher career ladder promotes educators based on their effectiveness and includes opportunities to earn additional compensation, such as by teaching students in academies or coaching their peers. LPS will continue to monitor and refine the implementation of the career ladder and leadership opportunities based on educator feedback and workforce trends. • <u>Staff engagement:</u> There will be high levels of engagement from all staff across the district in achieving district goals. 2015 update: School-based teacher leadership teams have empowered and engaged educators in decision-making at the school level, and in the coming years LPS and Lawrence Teachers' Union (LTU) will maximize

	<p>the effectiveness of these teams through additional support and training. LPS will continue efforts such as the Teacher Leader Cabinet, faculty surveys, and other vehicles to solicit feedback before, during and after implementation of new goals and initiatives. In addition, LPS will build on the publication of <i>Our Way Forward</i>—which set forth LPS’s vision in a booklet sent to all staff—to improve internal communications, ensuring that all staff feels engaged in the ongoing transformation.</p>
1b. TIME: Provide increased quality instructional time for students in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Acceleration Academies:</i></u> Students who are struggling will be provided with focused, data-driven instruction in areas of need during winter and spring vacation weeks. The district will selectively recruit highly capable urban educators from across the district and around the country to provide instruction. 2015 update: Acceleration Academies have proved a critical intervention to deliver high-quality, targeted instruction to students who most need additional support. The Sontag prize program has drawn talented educators from within Lawrence and across the nation to serve our students, with educators receiving high-quality professional development and an honorarium for their work. The district has expanded the number of students in academies each year of the turnaround effort (from 1,000 students per vacation week in 2013 to 2,500 in 2015) and intends to maintain this program at high enrollment levels. • <u><i>Saturday sessions:</i></u> A number of schools, including the high schools, provide optional extra time after school and on Saturdays for students who are struggling. These programs will gain additional organization and structure in the future. 2015 update: Saturday academies are a commonly used intervention at many schools, and are established in schools’ annual school plans. • <u><i>Tutoring and targeted interventions:</i></u> The two Level 4 high schools will increase the amount of quality instructional time through a partnership with MATCH Fellows to provide intensive and focused support during a double block of math. MATCH Fellows operated at the BMF and INT schools for two school years, and transitioned the program to in-house tutoring across LHS in school year 2014-2015. The district will continue to examine the tutoring program and other specialized academic interventions as we proceed with plans for the larger Lawrence High School redesign (see item 4D for further information). • <u><i>Summer learning and enrichment:</i></u> The Receiver is working with Teach for America (TFA) to develop a TFA Summer Training Institute in the district, beginning in summer 2013. The institute would be in addition to the district’s traditional summer school offerings. In addition, the district will develop a plan for hybrid summer learning opportunities that will include academics and enrichment. 2015 update: The TFA Institute was established in summer 2014 and complements the district’s new Level Up summer learning program, which includes both academics and enrichment. LPS will continue the TFA Summer Academy in summer 2015 and in future years. • <u><i>School schedules:</i></u> For the 2012-2013 school year, current daily school schedules will be continued except as approved or required by the Receiver. The Receiver may approve any school’s strong plan for expanding learning time for school year 2012-2013, including plans for extended time for Level 4 schools as reflected in their School Redesign Grant applications. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, each school’s program shall be a minimum of 1,330 hours per school year. During the 2012-2013 school year, each principal will engage in a planning process involving the faculty and staff, parents, students, and members of the community to develop a new school schedule based on student needs and school and community assets. Each plan will address how learning time will support (1) high academic success, especially through personalized support and learning; (2) a well-rounded education that may include subjects not part of standardized testing; activities such as arts, music, drama, robotics and sports; and social emotional learning; and (3) expanded time for teachers to collaborate, use student data and develop their practice. Plans should

	<p>be creative in the use of adaptive software, staggered teacher schedules, acceleration academies, summer learning and enrichment programs, and outside partners. Each plan must address opportunities to incorporate community partners and resources and must include an appropriate and sustainable arrangement about teacher and staff responsibilities, hours, and compensation. The principal will recommend the plan to the Receiver after consultation with the faculty and staff of the school. The Receiver may require the inclusion of any reasonable exceptions to these provisions and may require changes in any plan to best serve the interests of the students. Plans will be approved at the Receiver's discretion. 2015 update: Expanded learning time (ELT) has been implemented in grades 1-8, with select early childhood centers also implementing ELT for Pre-K and K. As of fall 2015, the 9th Grade Academy at Lawrence High School will add additional learning time at the start of the school year as an extended year for all 9th grade students. As the district proceeds with the high school redesign (see 4D for more information), we will explore options for expanded time at additional grade levels. Individual school teams revisit their ELT plans annually to determine whether they should be modified. All plans remain subject to the approval of the Receiver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>School calendar:</i> The Receiver will establish the school calendar each year. For the 2012-2013 school year, the calendar will provide for the school year to begin during the last full week of the month of August. A two-week winter break will overlap the end/beginning of the calendar year, and there will be a one week break during February and a one week break during April. The Receiver may approve an alternate calendar at the request of a school principal, if the principal and the Receiver determine that the alternate calendar is in the best interests of the students in the school. 2015 update: The annual school calendar has been established, running from August through June; the calendar will be maintained and/or modified in the future as needed. Working from a baseline district calendar provided by central office during the annual school planning process, school teams create school-specific calendars to best meet their students' needs.
<p>1c. DATA: Increase the use of assessment data in improving instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assessment system:</i> The district will develop an assessment system to ensure that data are regularly collected on each student to measure progress and assess areas of need. 2015 update: While interim assessments (including ANet, Test Wiz, iReady, and NWEA MAP) are routinely in place in the K-8 schools, this work is not yet fully developed at the high school level. Common assessments were piloted at Lawrence High School in school year 2014-2015 and will be incorporated as part of the high school redesign process (see 4D for more information). • <i>Inquiry:</i> All schools across the district will be expected to use common planning time to examine data to improve instruction. A district-wide inquiry process and common professional development will support this initiative. 2015 update: Led by principals and teacher leadership teams, each school conducts an annual improvement process, in which schools establish new priorities based on student data, site visit results, and other indicators. Schools determine development needs for the upcoming school year based on these priorities, and these components are compiled as part of the annual school plans reviewed by the Receiver. To inform schools' areas for development and further support continuous improvement efforts, LPS will expand progress monitoring site visits by independent third-parties to additional Level 3 schools in the coming years. • <i>New data management system:</i> The district is considering the purchase of an overarching data management system that will connect the district's existing data systems and electronically integrate student achievement, human resource, and payroll data. 2015 update: After a comprehensive systems review in spring 2013, the district prioritized upgrades to its decades-old financial and human resources information systems. In school year 2014-2015, LPS

	<p>migrated to the MUNIS financial and payroll system, and will roll out additional modules in the coming year. In addition, LPS aims to begin use of an integrated student and academic data platform in school year 2015-2016, which will enable the district and schools to design user-friendly data reports. This platform will be tested, refined, and expanded over the coming years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Communications</u>: LPS will develop a communications plan to ensure that stakeholders can understand the data that the district is tracking and the data's use in driving actions to meet the district's high expectations. 2015 update: While individual schools have made significant progress in publicizing school-level data, the district as a whole will increase its production of user-friendly, dual-language documents, posters, newsletters, and other communications to better explain the district's overarching goals and progress to date.
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Strategic Objective 2: People and Partners	
Rationale	In order to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in Lawrence, the district will make the most effective use of its resources, especially its staff. The district requires great leaders in every school, great teachers in every classroom, and great staff throughout the district. Principals will need the authority to make staffing decisions based on the best interests of the students in their schools; the Receiver also has the authority to determine workforce size and district organization across the Lawrence Public Schools. In order to bring about rapid improvement in some of its lowest-performing schools, the district will recruit proven partners to operate some of these schools. Building a strong central district team focused on supporting schools will be a critical tool in meeting this strategic objective.
Initiatives	Description of related activities
2a. Hire and cultivate great STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Receiver's Review</u>: The Receiver and his leadership team are conducting an initial review of teacher talent in the district to ensure that teachers of concern are identified and held accountable. Teachers whose performance is determined to be "unsatisfactory" as a result of the Receiver's Initial Review process will be dismissed. Teachers whose performance is determined to be "Needs Improvement" through the Receiver's Initial Review process will be placed on an "Educator Improvement Plan" or an "Educator Directed Growth Plan" at the discretion of the Receiver or his designee. 2015 update: The Receiver's Review was implemented in spring 2013 and completed that summer. Since that time, school principals have maintained responsibility and control over educator evaluation and improvement initiatives. • <u>Educator evaluation</u>: LPS will implement a new evaluation system that will increase support and accountability consistent with new state regulations. 2015 update: LPS has implemented the educator evaluation system and provided support to administrators to effectively use this tool with educators in their schools. In the coming years, LPS will continue to ensure that administrators receive targeted support to refine their implementation of this tool. • <u>Recruitment and retention</u>: An aggressive recruitment campaign through regional and national networks will attract teachers with high potential to the district. Similarly, the district will focus on the recruitment and retention of the best staff in all other areas of work across the district. 2015 update: In the coming years, the district will continue to focus on building strong recruitment pipelines and developing new strategies for retaining skilled teachers and staff. Continued expansion and refinement of teacher leadership roles will also support efforts to recruit and retain great talent. • <u>Teach for America (TFA) Institute</u>: The Receiver and his leadership team will work with TFA to develop a Summer Training Institute beginning in summer 2013. In this model, the high potential TFA teachers who come to the district will receive intensive classroom experience and learn essential teaching skills by partnering with LPS teachers to provide a summer learning opportunity for students. 2015 update: The TFA Institute was established in summer 2014. The Institute adds to the district's summer learning programs, while introducing potential teaching candidates to Lawrence schools. LPS will continue the TFA Summer Academy in summer 2015 and in future years. • <u>Incentives to recruit and retain</u>: Stipends such as a Teacher Leader Cabinet and the Sontag prize for urban education will be used as performance-based awards to retain the district's highly effective educators as well as to recruit additional highly effective educators to the district. 2015 update: In addition to robust implementation of these opportunities, as part of the teacher career ladder LPS has implemented advanced and master educator roles which provide additional opportunities for educators to expand their reach by helping their peers improve their instructional practice. In future years, LPS will refine its suite of educator leadership opportunities, including codifying a detailed menu of options for talented educators to work with students beyond the school day, and assume leadership roles at the school and district levels.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Policies and agreements:</i></u> Certain changes to the district’s policies, agreements, and working terms are necessary to achieve the goals of the turnaround plan. Appendix A contains changes that will take effect as of July 2012 and must be incorporated in future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver and/or the Commissioner, subject to their discretion, will initiate discussions and processes, as appropriate pursuant to G.L. c. 69, s. 1K. 2015 update: New policies and provisions have been implemented and included in collective bargaining agreements as applicable, and will be codified into an updated LPS policy manual beginning in school year 2015-2016.
2b. Hire and cultivate great LEADERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Recruit talent:</i></u> LPS seeks to identify and cultivate an in-district pipeline of talent while bolstering recruiting efforts through regional and national networks. Proven school operators are expected to bring talent to the district. 2015 update: LPS has established the Educator Initiatives Office. This office complements the work of HR by focusing solely on talent management, including recruitment, networking, and marketing efforts to expand the pipeline of potential candidates. • <u><i>Leadership changes:</i></u> The Receiver intends to make school leadership changes in order to bring focus and urgency to school improvement. To cite two examples: 1) a headmaster will be appointed to facilitate coordination, continuity, and collaboration across the Lawrence High School campus. 2) The South Lawrence East Middle School will be reconstituted gradually under the leadership of a new principal. 2015 update: Over 50percent of the school leaders were replaced during the first three years of the turnaround effort. LPS will continue to evaluate its school leaders annually, ensuring every principal is an effective steward of school improvement at his/her site. • <u><i>Empower and enable talented school leaders:</i></u> The district’s move to autonomy, raising the bar on rigor, and providing flexibility in human capital practices will serve to empower school leaders. (More information about the granting of autonomies by the Receiver can be found in Strategic Objective 4: Autonomy and Accountability.) 2015 update: LPS has been able to attract and retain talented school leaders with a promise of autonomy with support; to maintain this, LPS must continue to empower school leaders and ensure that they receive high-quality support tailored to their needs. • <u><i>Clear accountability and support:</i></u> A new evaluation and accountability system will provide clear rewards and consequences for over- and under-performers. The system will set high expectations and provide support in areas of need. 2015 update: A new compensation system was developed in school year 2013-2014 that significantly raised pay for principals, which included the potential for performance bonuses. In addition to assigning each school an academic advisor to provide holistic coaching on school improvement, LPS has matched principals with a number of professional development organizations and university partners. Going forward, LPS will ensure its menu of supports for principals can meet the needs of each school leader, and create more opportunities for peer learning among administrators across the district.
2c. Build a CENTRAL TEAM focused on supporting schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Central office:</i></u> The Receiver has already made several key additions to his executive team including a chief of staff, an assistant receiver for teacher effectiveness, and a scholar re-engagement manager. He expects to continue to build a strong team, while making every effort to remain budget neutral, including hiring an administrator to lead the Redesign Office and to increase accountability at the central office for contributing to student achievement gains. At the same time, the Receiver intends to conduct a review of the central office in the 2012-2013 school year to identify efficiencies and service improvements that will lead to a gradual reallocation of resources to district schools. 2015 update: After a review of the central office in winter/spring 2013, the Receiver reduced central office personnel by over 30percent; pushing \$1.6 million to the school-level, and the following year allocated an additional \$5 million in central, non-salary funds to

	<p>schools. Over time, we will continue to narrow and refine the purpose of the central office, focusing on delivering high-quality services and supports to schools. These services are now primarily operational in nature, with most academic functions now located at the school level. A small teaching and learning team remains in the central office, focused on areas such as providing academic coaching to schools, establishing new enrichment programs, providing planning support for acceleration academies, and implementing educator leadership initiatives. The district Redesign Office continues to improve systems for enhancing school autonomy and support, to seek and pilot new initiatives and partnerships for the district and its schools, and to ensure the district remains on target to achieve its performance goals. The Receiver hired two administrators to lead the Redesign Office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>School Committee:</i> The Receiver will continue to work to build the effectiveness of school committee interactions. This will include continued updates about district information and a professional development plan developed in coordination with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC). The professional development will focus on building the Lawrence School Committee's capacity and preparing it to resume its duties when the district has demonstrated sufficient gains and embedded the requisite positive change to meet its goal of exiting receivership. 2015 update: Training and development opportunities were offered to members of the Lawrence School Committee in 2012 by representatives from the Massachusetts School Committee Association. A few members participated in a MASC conference in November 2012, with expenses paid by LPS. Over the past three years, through scheduled meetings and conversations with individual members, the Receiver has solicited feedback from school committee members and enabled them to participate in discussions about improvement strategies for the district. In addition, school committee members have been actively involved in communicating information about the turnaround plan and new initiatives to families and the community. LPS intends to engage the school committee in a similar way, and to provide additional support, in the coming years. If it appears that sufficient gains have been made that could result in the conclusion of receivership, in the third year of this renewed plan period the district will work with the mayor and the school committee to determine what training and other supports are needed to ensure that the school committee will be prepared for a highly-functioning role in the governance of the school district post receivership.
<p>2d. Recruit proven PARTNERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Proven partners:</i> Subject to negotiation with a proven partner(s), LPS will contract with the proven partner(s) to operate some schools in the district. The Phoenix Foundation, a proven partner operating a high school in Chelsea, will contract with the district to open a new alternative district high school to re-engage disconnected and other underperforming students and to provide a college preparatory education. UP Education Network, a Boston-based school operator, will operate the Leonard Middle School, beginning with grade 6 in school year 2012-2013. The Community Group, a proven Lawrence school operator, will take over management of the Arlington Elementary School over a period of two years, beginning with kindergarten and grade 1 in school year 2012-2013 and moving to all grades in school year 2013-2014. 2015 update: LPS maintains its partnerships with The Community Group, UP Education Network, and Phoenix Academy. In addition, the district has added the American Federation of Teachers/Lawrence Teachers Union and Lawrence Family Development Education Fund as school partners. Community agencies have also played a significant role as providers of enrichment programming within the expanded day in LPS schools. In future years, the district intends to enhance efforts to ensure the full integration of these school partners into the fabric of LPS, and to ensure that each partner is supported to be successful in maximizing student outcomes. • <i>MATCH Fellows:</i> This ESE Priority Partner will provide intensive math tutoring at Business Management & Finance (BMF) and International (INT) High Schools. Recent college graduates with strong interpersonal and math skills will provide intensive tutoring based on assessment data in a two-students-to-one-adult setting. Fellows currently provide intensive

	<p>tutoring services under this model at a number of Boston and Houston schools. 2015 update: MATCH Fellows operated at the BMF and INT schools for two school years, and transitioned the program to in-house tutoring in all of the schools across LHS, primarily in math, in school year 2014-2015. The district will continue to examine the tutoring program and other specialized academic interventions as we proceed with plans for the larger Lawrence High School redesign (see 4D for more information).</p>
<p>2e. Make EFFECTIVE USE OF STAFF RESOURCES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Decision making:</u> Principals will devise a process through which the principal will consult with staff before making decisions affecting the school. 2015 update: To empower educators in school-based decision-making, LPS and LTU established teacher leadership teams in each school beginning in school year 2014-2015. Such distributed leadership is new for many in LPS, and much work remains to ensure that school-level teams are supported to function effectively at each school. • <u>Staffing:</u> To ensure that schools have the most effective staff working in the most productive manner, principals will make staffing decisions based on the best interests of the students in their schools, including having the authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates without regard to seniority. 2015 update: This provision has been implemented and included in collective bargaining agreements as applicable. • <u>Professional obligations:</u> Teachers and other professional staff are expected to devote the necessary time and effort to fulfill their professional obligations, as defined by the principal and approved by the Receiver. 2015 update: This provision has been implemented and included in collective bargaining agreements as applicable. • <u>Layoff:</u> To ensure that the most effective staff are retained in the event of a layoff, the Receiver will establish selection criteria for layoffs, including the following, as appropriate: qualifications, licensure, work history, multiple measures of student learning, operational need, and the best interests of the students. 2015 update: This provision has been implemented and included in collective bargaining agreements as applicable. • <u>Policies and agreements:</u> Certain changes to the district's policies, agreements, and working terms are necessary to achieve the goals of the turnaround plan. Appendix A contains changes that will take effect as of July 2012 and must be incorporated in future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver and/or Commissioner, subject to their discretion, will initiate discussions and processes, as appropriate pursuant to G.L. c. 69, s. 1K. 2015 update: New policies and provisions have been implemented and included in collective bargaining agreements as applicable, and will be codified into an updated LPS policy manual beginning in school year 2015-2016. • <u>Compensation:</u> LPS will restructure compensation to ensure that its investment in educators promotes and values effective performance. This initiative will link educator compensation to district objectives for performance: recruitment; retention; level of responsibility; and student achievement. 2015 update: LPS has established a new teacher career ladder to promote teachers based on their effectiveness. In addition, LPS has provided for new opportunities for great teachers to extend their reach, such as by teaching students over vacations or on Saturdays, or serving as a model classroom for peer observation as an advanced or master educator. In addition, principals have discretion to provide stipends for teachers for school-level leadership or other roles. In future, the district will continue to refine the career ladder based on educator feedback and trends, as well as to embed teacher leadership roles in the fabric of the district and schools.

Strategic Objective 3: Support and Engagement	
Rationale	In order to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in Lawrence, students and staff will need parent and community support for the new culture of high expectations in the LPS. The Lawrence community has many assets and skills that can contribute to this effort. Social/emotional supports will allow students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, to be prepared to succeed during instructional time. Engaging and exciting students through enrichment opportunities will be an essential tool in this strategic objective.
Initiatives	Description of related activities
3a. Provide strong SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL supports beyond academics to ensure students can be physically and mentally present during instructional time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>PBIS</u>: Increased roll out of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at high schools will help develop a culture that encourages desirable student behaviors. 2015 update: As part of the high school redesign, 9th grade students will be provided with appropriate social/emotional supports and behavioral guidance to ensure a strong entry into high school. As students transition into the upper grades, they will graduate to a behavioral model that builds toward independent self-regulation. • <u>Adult guidance</u>: LPS will provide more opportunities to build student relationships with adult mentors through guidance counselors, MATCH Fellows, and partnering with mentors from local agencies. The district will also connect students with outside service providers when needed, for example, in the areas of mental health and substance abuse. 2015 update: Establishing robust adult mentor relationships for students will continue to be a priority in the coming years. • <u>High school options</u>: The district, partnering with the Phoenix Foundation of Chelsea, MA, will open a new alternative high school to re-engage and motivate dropouts and other at-risk young adults and ensure that they graduate prepared for college and other post-high school options. The International High School will become a transitional school that focuses on providing accelerated academic and social/emotional support to newcomers to the country and the district. 2015 update: In addition to the partnership with the Phoenix Academy Lawrence, new leadership at the High School Learning Center has made significant improvements in student experience and student achievement for at-risk youth. In the coming years, LPS will strengthen its alternative programming options to ensure a sufficient range of supports to engage youth with a wide array of needs. As part of the planned Lawrence High School campus redesign, International High School will transition into a Newcomers Academy with clear entry and exit criteria. This will ensure that students receive critical transitional support and are prepared to effectively integrate into a general classroom setting as soon as they are able. • <u>School safety audit</u>: The district will conduct a district-wide audit to assess the current state of school safety and the fidelity of implementation of the district's discipline policy as well as to identify opportunities to create a secure environment for learning to take place. 2015 update: The district, working with each school team, has updated its safety protocols to ensure a secure learning environment for each school. In the coming years, LPS will update its discipline policies to ensure appropriate inclusion of new policies, for instance to address new forms of technology and mobile devices. • <u>Partnerships for health services</u>: The district will review its existing partnerships with public, non-profit, university, and private health service organizations in order to coordinate health service and prevention screening activities occurring throughout the district. 2015 update: Health services supports are now coordinated district-wide through the Family Resource Center. At the Center, families are able to learn about the wide array of community-based supports that are available in Lawrence and how to access these services. • <u>Wraparound supports</u>: The district will continue to learn from best practices from Wraparound Zones at four district schools. 2015 update: Wraparound supports are now coordinated district-wide through the Family Resource Center, where families can learn about and access the wide array of supports available in Lawrence.

<p>3b. Develop targeted supports for ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs) who make up a substantial portion of the district enrollment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Core strategy</u>: The core strategies of time, data, engagement, people, and partnerships are meant to target all students in the district. These core strategies will be particularly important to decrease the achievement gap between struggling students and other LPS students. 2015 update: ELLs have benefited from opportunities to participate in strengthened core instruction, acceleration academies, and new enrichment opportunities across the district. In addition, individual schools have invested in new strategies tailored specifically to ELLs as part of their school plans, including theater enrichment programs and intervention software to build literacy skills. In the coming years, LPS will ensure that successful practices are shared widely across schools to support continuous improvement in serving our ELLs. • <u>Professional development</u>: The district has already embarked on an ambitious campaign to provide Category training this summer to teachers across the district. To strengthen instruction for our limited English-proficient students, the district will embrace the training from the Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (RETELL) program. 2015 update: The district has offered multiple SEI endorsement courses, enabling 96percent of eligible LPS administrators and approximately 45percent of eligible educators to complete these requirements. LPS has filled all allotted SEI endorsement course seats provided by the state for the past two years. Our goal is to ensure that 90percent of eligible educators will be trained by the end of school year 2015-2016. We will reach our goal by first targeting those educators who have been identified by the state as needing to earn the SEI endorsement, following up with a targeted second set of educators whom LPS has determined also needs to earn the SEI endorsement before opening it up to all core-academic educators. LPS will reach out to these educators via multiple means and outlets to encourage participation. In addition, LPS has partnered with UMass Lowell to provide graduate coursework towards ESL licensure for interested educators and professional development for administrators, educators, and paraprofessionals who support ELLs. • <u>New data management system</u>: Purchase of ESL Innovations data management system will aggregate data on ELLs, make it electronic, and enable it to be sorted and analyzed in multiple ways in order to improve delivery of instruction to students. 2015 update: LPS has used the ELLevations data management system for several years, but will move these fields to a new comprehensive student and academic data platform beginning in school year 2015-2016.
<p>3c. Develop targeted supports for STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES who make up an above-state-average portion of the district enrollment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Core strategy</u>: The core strategies of time, data, engagement, people, and partnerships are meant to target all students in the district. These core strategies will be particularly important to decrease the achievement gap between struggling students and other LPS students. 2015 update: Students with disabilities have benefited from opportunities to participate in strengthened core instruction, acceleration academies, and new enrichment opportunities across the district. In addition, individual schools have invested in new strategies tailored specifically to students with disabilities as part of their school plans, including developing more robust response-to-intervention programs. In the coming years, LPS will ensure successful practices are shared widely across schools to support continuous improvement in serving our students with disabilities. • <u>Appropriate support</u>: The district will conduct a system-wide audit of special education services. Ensuring that students with disabilities receive instruction from the most effective teachers in an appropriately inclusive environment will help to close the achievement gap. 2015 update: After a district-wide audit, LPS has taken a school-by-school approach to supporting improved special education services, both for inclusive and substantially separate settings. In the coming years, LPS will deepen its support to school leaders, educators, and specialized support staff to ensure highly-effective practices are in place at each school. To ensure LPS is providing the most effective services and supports, the district will conduct targeted reviews of central special education services and school-level programs in school year 2015-2016, identifying key areas for continued redesign and professional development.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Professional development</u>: The district will continue to provide strong Response to Intervention (RTI) training to identify and serve struggling students, including students with disabilities. 2015 update: The district has continued its partnership with Melmark to support educators of students with disabilities to develop high-quality programs for students on the Autism Spectrum and to train paraprofessionals to work in specialized classroom settings. Professional development has also been provided to staff in the areas of response to intervention, trauma-informed schools, and inclusion practices. • <u>Service delivery model</u>: The district will examine the various service delivery models in use for serving students with disabilities in order to maximize instructional effectiveness. 2015 update: The district will continue to explore models for appropriately inclusive education of students with disabilities, including the use of technology in the classroom. Successful school-based practices will be shared district-wide.
3d. Increase PARENT & COMMUNITY engagement to support the high expectations culture of LPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Family Resource Center</u>: The district will open a Family Resource Center to increase communication and information flow with parents and connection to the school community. The Center will ensure the appropriate translation of district documents so as to be accessible to parents and the community. Drawing on their daily work, the staff of the Family Resource Center will educate other LPS staff members about the Lawrence community and its cultures. The Resource Center will assist families with issues for struggling students, such as the 504 process and IEPs for students with disabilities. 2015 update: In school year 2013-2014, the district opened a Family Resource Center for families to enroll students, to address issues or concerns with student placements, to receive referrals to community resources and services, and to attend trainings and workshops on topics of interest. The new Center included the addition of staff with specialized expertise in community engagement. In the coming years, in collaboration with Lawrence Community Works and the Lawrence Working Families Initiative, LPS will expand the resources, partnerships, and activities available through the Family Resource Center to deepen parent engagement in the schools and to support economic advancement of the city at large. In addition to working with school teams to foster school-level parent engagement, LPS will strengthen city-wide engagement through new planned events for LPS families and students, including student showcases and transition ceremonies. • <u>Community partnerships</u>: The district will identify and pursue potential partnerships with community organizations, local agencies, and institutions of higher education. The district will conduct a mapping of community resources in order to identify high potential partners. 2015 update: Community agencies and non-profits have been critical partners in the district's turnaround work. Most notably, community agencies have played a significant role as providers of enrichment programming within the expanded day in LPS schools, and have also served as key partners in summer learning and after-school programs. A Community Partners group, composed of the directors of core Lawrence community agencies, meets several times per year to assess the status of current partnerships and to explore strategies to support further initiatives and community engagement to support the district's turnaround. • <u>Alternative high school</u>: By re-engaging dropouts and other disconnected youth, Phoenix Academy Lawrence will provide these students with options for high school graduation and college and career success. 2015 update: While this program has made significant gains in creating new and improved options for students, refinement will continue to be a priority in the coming years (see 3A). In addition, the High School Learning Center also works to provide options for Lawrence's high school students.

<p>3e. Increase ENRICHMENT opportunities to engage and excite students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Arts</u>: The development of arts opportunities across all grades in the district will help provide students with a holistic education. 2015 update: The district has added significant instructional leadership capacity to build school-based and district-wide arts programming, including new programs in choral and instrumental music, musical theater, and visual arts. In the coming years, LPS will strengthen school-based programs and aim to create a continuum of arts programming options to ensure that all students have access to enrichment from their entry into LPS through high school. In addition to building internal capacity, individual schools have collaborated with community partners to provide additional arts and enrichment programming both onsite at schools and offsite at partner agencies. • <u>After school activities</u>: After-school enrichment options will be increased in a variety of ways across the district. 2015 update: LPS has supported schools to increase enrichment programming after school in addition to during the school day. • <u>Athletics</u>: Athletics offerings will be expanded, including through the addition of intramural middle school sports. Spark Academy will adopt a research-based model to integrate athletics and academics. 2015 update: LPS has invested heavily in the expansion of intramural athletics at the middle school level and team sports at the high school level. School-based enrichment programs within the expanded school day at the elementary and middle schools—including Spark Academy—have included karate, yoga, step-dancing, and other fitness-related offerings.
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Strategic Objective 4: Autonomy and Accountability	
Rationale	To maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in Lawrence, schools need to be empowered to create change. The autonomy granted to and used by our proven partners has yielded significant gains in student achievement; this demonstrates the potential that our own schools can attain when their principals are permitted to focus first and foremost on educating their students. Autonomies related to human capital, resource allocation, program delivery, and school operations may be granted by the Receiver to schools, based on school performance. District-wide accountability is necessary to ensure that the district is on track to make rapid progress; see Performance Benchmarks (below), Implementation Benchmarks (below), and Measurable Annual Goals (Appendix B) for the aggressive district and state targets to which the district will be held accountable. District-level systems and supports, including the Office of School Improvement, will be essential tools in this strategic objective.
Initiatives	Description of related activities
4a. Increased AUTONOMY for schools to empower them to create change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Creating the system:</i> LPS is establishing a process by which high-performing schools can earn and use autonomies. 2015 update: LPS has established the “open architecture” model which is codified in several supporting documents used by the Lawrence schools, primarily as part of the annual school planning process. As part of open architecture, LPS has selected a model of <i>guided autonomy</i>. Schools are granted wide latitude to make local decisions, provided they have a strong plan in place for student achievement; all plans are approved by the Receiver. To guide schools in developing strong plans, the LPS team has assigned each school a coach to support differentiated school improvement, and begun developing a menu of high-quality default services that schools can use as a baseline. In the next few years, LPS will continue to strengthen its system of supports to ensure that all schools use autonomies effectively, as well as to further develop cross-school networks to enable schools to learn from one another. • <i>Give autonomies:</i> LPS is identifying the autonomies that may be granted by the Receiver based on performance to all district schools, to proven school operators, and to high performing earned autonomy schools. For example, these autonomies, which are consistent with good management practices and Massachusetts law, will include but are not limited to the ability to make personnel and staffing decisions, to set the school schedule, to allocate the school’s resources, to manage the use of the school’s facilities, and to establish school-based policies including the student code of discipline, school attendance policies, and extra-curricular programs. 2015 update: School-based autonomies are codified in LPS’s open architecture philosophy and the school planning process, in which schools make annual recommendations to the Receiver about calendar, schedule, curriculum, professional development, budget, staffing, and purchased services. In the coming years, LPS will ensure full access to requisite school autonomies by continuing to clear out burdensome or unnecessary requirements on schools. For instance, the district will work with the city to determine whether policies can be established to treat individual schools as separate entities for purposes of the city’s procurement policy, while at the same time ensuring the proper district-level financial controls and oversight. In addition, LPS will fine-tune its codification and implementation of school autonomy components and corresponding central policies that remain district-wide non-negotiables. Over the next three years, central office departments and schools will develop a deep and common understanding of the specific school autonomies and district policies in place at LPS.

<p>4b. Develop system-wide ACCOUNTABILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>School accountability</u>: A clear system for measuring school success will be developed, as will rewards and consequences for principals and partners who achieve, or do not achieve, identified targets. Targets will be established by the district as well as the state. LPS aims to achieve at levels that are even higher than the ambitious state targets for closing the proficiency gap. 2015 update: LPS leadership closely monitors school performance on a variety of indicators, including student achievement on MCAS and graduation/drop-out rates, principal capacity and vision for school improvement, teacher satisfaction, quality and breadth of student enrichment programs, parent engagement, and other indicators. Annually, these factors are used to make school-level determinations, such as leadership changes or student intervention programs. In the coming years, LPS will codify these factors into a holistic factsheet for each school, which will serve as a basis for annual school determinations. • <u>School Improvement Plans</u>: Each school will develop a School Improvement Plan for the Receiver's review and approval. The plans will address how each school will implement the district plan, including providing increased quality instructional time for students, establishing high expectations for students, and defining professional obligations for staff. 2015 update: Each school team is required to develop an annual school plan that outlines its coming year priorities and how the school will use autonomies in areas such as calendar, schedule, professional development, curriculum, staffing, and budget to produce improved outcomes for students. The submission of annual plans has enabled the initial concept of one-time School Improvement Plans to become an annual focal point for continuous improvement at each school. • <u>Educator accountability</u>: The district will work with stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the new educator evaluation system. 2015 update: While schools have made significant progress in implementation of the educator evaluation system, this will continue to be a priority for refinement in the coming years.
<p>4c. Develop targeted SUPPORT, especially for high-needs schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Create Redesign Office</u>: LPS will establish the Redesign Office to support and monitor implementation of Level 4 school and district plans. The office will work with schools to prepare them to meet the threshold for earning autonomy. 2015 update: Created in 2013, the Redesign Office has served as the lead design and implementation team for turnaround plan strategies. While the initial focus was on creating plans for school turnaround of Level 4 schools, redesign efforts have expanded to include: development of the open architecture model; district-wide school improvement initiatives; the reshaping of a leaner, more responsive central office; creation of a labor-management partnership with the Lawrence Teachers Union; and development of new educator leadership initiatives. The Redesign Office also works with school teams to effectively implement earned autonomies. In the coming years, the Redesign Office will support the implementation of the renewed district turnaround plan, including designing and managing existing and new initiatives and finalizing collective bargaining agreements with remaining unions consistent with the turnaround plan by spring 2016. • <u>Facilities</u>: LPS will expedite high priority maintenance items to address health and safety issues and to improve school environments for learning. LPS has invested approximately \$5M in overdue facilities maintenance and repairs, ensuring long-neglected buildings are restored to effective learning environments for students. In the coming years, LPS will undertake a comprehensive review of the district's long-range facilities needs, both in terms of ensuring adequate space to absorb a growing student population and addressing ongoing repairs and maintenance. This information will support the development of a school facilities' master plan, in conjunction with the development of a long-range city capital plan by the City of Lawrence and the city's fiscal overseer.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Curriculum</u>: LPS will continue curriculum mapping and realignment efforts that are underway to adopt the new Common Core state standards. 2015 update: While schools have made significant progress in common core curriculum development, this will continue to be a priority for refinement in the coming years. • <u>STEM focus</u>: Given the importance of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) proficiency to success in the twenty-first century economy, the district will build toward a STEM focus at all school levels. Two specific initiatives are the dedicated math support that MATCH Fellows will offer and the expansion of relevant Advanced Placement offerings at the high school level. 2015 update: New STEM partnership initiatives are in place in many schools, including next generation math and science curriculum development work and robotics/technology after-school programs. In the coming years, the district will seek to expand and deepen a STEM focus across its schools.
4d. Build SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES to support turnaround	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Policies and agreements</u>: Certain changes to the district's policies, agreements, and working terms are necessary to achieve the goals of the turnaround plan. Appendix A contains changes that will take effect as of July 2012 and must be incorporated in future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver and/or the Commissioner, subject to their discretion, will initiate discussions and processes, as appropriate pursuant to G.L. c. 69, s. 1K. 2015 update: New policies and provisions have been implemented and included in collective bargaining agreements as applicable, and will be codified into an updated LPS policy manual beginning in school year 2015-2016. • <u>Develop systems</u>: Expectations and systems for supporting principals in the implementation of district systems (e.g., assessment system and resource allocation system as well as in successfully managing granted autonomies are being developed. 2015 update: The Receiver, the Redesign Office and key central departments have created new systems and supports for schools, including: supporting educators to conduct student-level data analysis through interim assessments and acceleration academies' student selection; supporting school teams through the school planning and budgeting process; creating a centralized enrollment system through the Family Resource Center; and implementing school-based decision-making through teacher leadership teams. In addition, each school is assigned a coach to support school improvement through use of autonomies. Coaches—either district personnel or partners working in the district—support schools on efforts to improve teaching and learning, and serve as thought partners to schools through the annual planning process. • <u>High school</u>: An intensive focus on assessment, social/emotional support, and math (e.g., through the MATCH Fellows partnership at two schools) will shape the high school program. New structures and systems, including hiring a headmaster to manage operational responsibilities across the campus, will serve to support the planned redesign of the high school. 2015 update: With a new headmaster in place, LPS and Lawrence High School Campus leadership is undertaking a comprehensive redesign of LHS. The backbone of the planned redesign is to create a more structured learning environment in the 9th and 10th grades, while gradually releasing responsibility to 11th and 12th graders to become independent, self-motivated learners. Beginning in fall 2015, a new 9th Grade Academy will be implemented across all six of the current themed high schools. The 9th Grade Academy will include additional academic and social/emotional supports for at-risk students, and an Abbott Lawrence accelerated studies program. Also in fall 2015, International High School will transition into a Newcomers Academy with clear entry and exit criteria, to ensure that students effectively transition into a general classroom setting as soon as they are prepared to do so. In the coming year, LPS and LHS leadership will develop a plan to reconstitute the remaining schools (BMF, HLD, HHS, MST, and PFA) under the umbrella of one unified high school, while preserving the feel of small learning communities. Within a unified high school,

	<p>students will have significantly increased access to differentiated coursework, such as electives, APs, and internship programs. In addition, teachers will develop stronger communities of practice within content areas and grade levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Preschool:</i></u> The district will develop a plan to increase availability and access to high-quality preschool experiences. 2015 update: The district has piloted four-year-old, full-day kindergarten programs at Lawrence Family Public Academy, in collaboration with the Lawrence Family Development Education Fund, and at Community Day Arlington, in partnership with The Community Group. In the coming years, LPS will work with two community-based agencies, The Community Group and Greater Lawrence Community Action Council), as part of a federal Preschool Expansion Grant that will add approximately 130 new four-year-old preschool seats in Lawrence. As part of this initiative, LPS will work collaboratively on efforts to coordinate city-wide preschool and four-year-old enrollment among local community agencies, city charter schools, and the Lawrence Public Schools. • <u><i>Technology infrastructure:</i></u> The district will conduct an audit to determine what new technology may be needed, and/or integration of existing technology, to improve productivity and data-sharing across the district, including the areas of human resources, payroll, and office systems. 2015 update: After conducting a comprehensive systems review in spring 2013, the district prioritized upgrades to its decades-old financial and human resources information systems. In school year 2014-2015, LPS migrated to the MUNIS financial and payroll system, and will roll out additional modules in the coming year. In addition, LPS aims to begin use of an integrated student and academic data platform in school year 2015-2016, which will enable the district and schools to design user-friendly data reports. In the coming years, with E-Rate funding restored to LPS, the district will undertake replacement of outdated computer hardware and enable schools to make technology choices to better support a twenty-first century learning environment.
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Statutory Components of the Turnaround Plan

Here we highlight and reinforce how the strategic objectives described above include steps to address the specific student subgroups and programmatic areas identified in Chapter 69, Section 1K (c) of the Massachusetts General Laws.

- (1) *“Steps to address social service and health needs of students in the district and their families in order to help students arrive and remain at school ready to learn”*

The district has multiple partnerships with area health service organizations, universities, and state and local agencies to provide direct health services, prevention programs, and health information to students and their families. The district constantly reviews its existing partnerships in order to coordinate health service and prevention screening activities occurring throughout the district, at all grade levels. Where gaps are found between students’ needs and existing service partnerships, the district has created action plans for addressing those needs through new collaborations.

The district’s internal ability to address the health and mental health needs of our students has been augmented by the addition of more specialized personnel. The addition of case managers and social workers at several schools has allowed schools to more quickly respond to the needs of high-risk students and make appropriate referrals for students to community agencies, as needed, for students facing psychological issues. The district will continue to work with partners to provide professional development and information to our counselors, school nurses, health educators, and other staff who work with students and families to address health needs.

To connect students and their families to social services, the district established the Family Resource Center to serve as a one-stop location to receive information about the school system and to connect students and families with needed health, mental health, and social services.

- (2) *“Steps to improve or expand child welfare services and, as appropriate, law enforcement services in the school district community, in order to promote a safe and secure learning environment”*

Increased roll out of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports across the district will help develop a culture that encourages productive and safe student behaviors. Our focus on high expectations system-wide will promote a safe and secure learning environment as we strive to maximize quality instructional time for every student. Finally, the district will partner with local law enforcement agencies as appropriate to ensure that all LPS schools and activities are safe places for students to learn and educators to work.

- (3) *“As applicable, steps to improve workforce development services provided to students in the district and their families in order to provide students and families with meaningful employment skills and opportunities”*

A key part of the LPS vision is that our students will reach their full potential, and achieve college and career success. While the district’s four-year graduation rate has increased to 66.9percent (a 14.6 percentage point increase in three years), improvement of the graduation rate will continue to be a primary focus for increasing opportunities for our students. The planned redesign of the high school will include increased emphasis on partnerships with local universities, businesses, and non-profits that expose students to new skills and activities, and other initiatives to close the opportunity gap facing our students. Robust alternative high school options will increase the number of LPS students matriculating in college and also the number of post-graduation work training programs for graduates, including teenage parents, who need to work immediately after high school graduation.

(4) *“Steps to address achievement gaps for limited English-proficient, special education and low-income students, as applicable”*

With 92.4 percent of our students qualifying as low-income, our strategies for serving low-income students are synonymous with our overall strategies. The core strategies of time, data, engagement, people, partnerships, support and engagement have been used across all schools, with particular emphasis on those whose percentages of low-income students exceed even the district average.

These core strategies will also focus particularly on students who are struggling, especially limited-English proficient students and students with disabilities. We will ensure that these students receive instruction from our most effective teachers. To differentiate instruction for our students with disabilities, the district will continue to provide strong Response to Intervention (RTI) training. To differentiate instruction for our limited English-proficient students, the district will embrace the training that emanates from the Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (RETELL) program.

(5) *“Alternative English language learning programs for limited English-proficient students”*

We are increasing our capacity to adapt English language learning to the needs of individual limited-English proficient students by breaking this large category of students down into more finite sub-groups based on placement test performance. Continued professional development for school-based personnel, and the creation of a high school newcomers’ programs will also allow for more effective and differentiated English language learning programs.

(6) *“A budget for the district including any additional funds to be provided by the Commonwealth, federal government or other sources”*

Please see Appendix C for the district’s budget information.

Performance Benchmarks

Lawrence has set the following overarching goals for district and school performance within three years under the renewed turnaround plan*:

- Achieve a district-wide median SGP of 55 in ELA and math
- Increase district proficiency rates to at least 50percent in both ELA and math (up 9 percentage points in math and 6 percentage points in ELA)
- Add three schools achieving proficiency rates at or above the state average for ELA (increasing from zero to three), and double the number of schools achieving at or above the state average for math (increasing from three to six)
- Increase the district's four-year graduation rate to 80percent (a 13-percentage point increase from current rate)

*Note that goals are subject to change based on PARCC implementation decision and timeline.

As required by state law, Lawrence has also set measurable annual goals in the following areas:

- (1) student attendance, dismissal rates, and exclusion rates;
- (2) student safety and discipline;
- (3) student promotion and dropout rates;
- (3b) graduation rates;
- (4) student achievement on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS);
- (5) progress in areas of academic underperformance;
- (6) progress among subgroups of students, including low-income students as defined by Chapter 70, limited English-proficient students, and students with disabilities;
- (7) reduction of achievement gaps among different groups of students;
- (8) student acquisition and mastery of twenty-first century skills;
- (9) development of college readiness, including at the elementary and middle school levels;
- (10) parent and family engagement;
- (11) building a culture of academic success among students;
- (12) building a culture of student support and success among school faculty and staff; and
- (13) developmentally appropriate child assessments from pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade.

Detailed goals for each area through the 2016-2017 school year are set out in Appendix B.¹

¹ For the all-students group and for high-needs students (an unduplicated count of students who are either economically disadvantaged, English language learners, or students with disabilities), Lawrence has aligned the measurable annual goals to state expectations for progress and performance with regard to achievement and growth in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science, and graduation and drop-out rates.

Implementation Benchmarks for Year 1 (Short-Term Outcomes)*

Strategic Objective	Short-Term Outcome Benchmarks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall (for all strategic objectives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmark data show improvement in core indicators of student proficiency and graduation rate are on track toward meeting annual PPI progress goals. Improvement displayed in Level 4 schools shows that schools are on track to meeting their Measurable Annual Goals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectations, Time, and Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student and educator survey results indicate that schools have qualities of a rigorous learning environment and an effective model for student support and success. School-wide, students in expanded learning time programs show, on average, median SGPs of 51 or higher, and increasing rates of student proficiency. New integrated data platform pilots receive positive reviews regarding usefulness from end-users at school and district level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceleration Academies continue to display significant increases in achievement in areas of high need (as determined by measures such as pre- and post-tests or difference in MCAS performance between attendees and non-attendees). Students at Level 4 schools show significant gains on MCAS ELA and math assessments, demonstrating schools are on track to meet or exceed their Measurable Annual Goals. Assessment data from new preschool partnership program with The Community Group and Greater Lawrence Community Action Council indicate the majority of students are on track toward kindergarten readiness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents provide favorable ratings of their levels of engagement through school-level initiatives and the Family Resource Center (measure and target TBD). 9th grade course passing rates in core subjects are higher than the prior year at each marking term.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autonomy and Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By summer 2016, new LPS policy manual is produced codifying district policies and procedures; central office and school leader feedback indicates the majority of these groups believes that the new manual provides support to clarify policies and procedures. By summer 2016, collective bargaining agreements consistent with the turnaround plan for remaining unions are completed. By winter 2016, a facilities review is conducted to address growing enrollment in selected Lawrence neighborhoods.

*Note that goals are subject to change based on PARCC implementation decisions and timelines.

Implementation Benchmarks (Milestone Activities)

Strategic Objective	Implementation Benchmarks for School Year 2015-2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectations, Time, and Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a plan to provide differentiated support and training in collaborative decision-making for school administrators and teacher leadership teams, with implementation of some supports by winter 2016. Develop a formal menu of options of opportunities for students to receive high-quality instruction with top teachers (e.g. Acceleration Academies, Saturday academies, writing institutes, tutoring, etc.) by fall 2015, and connect this with the district's educator recruitment and retention strategy. Significantly upgrade the district's data platforms by beginning implementation of an integrated student and academic data platform by winter 2016, and implement additional modules of MUNIS human resources and financial system by spring 2016. Launch annual educator and parent surveys by spring 2016 to collect perceptual data on school and district progress. Create a central office planning process by winter 2016 in which departments annually define priorities to support school-level needs, organize their time and resources to support these priorities, and are supervised to ensure improvement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By winter 2016, further build out and refine district and school-based educator leadership roles, including professional development to support teacher leaders; produce updated guidance to educators about these opportunities. Refine the district's talent plan to ensure recruitment and retention of top educators in the district in school year 2015-2016. Further build the district's network of school-based partnerships by spring 2016, with focus on new partnerships that can impart critical thinking and STEM skills to students. In coordination with local organizations The Community Group and Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, open approximately 130 new Pre-K seats in Lawrence by fall 2015.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open new 9th Grade Academy—including ELL newcomers, at-risk and accelerated programs—at Lawrence High School in fall 2015. Finalize a plan for the second phase of the high school redesign by winter 2016. Continue to offer SEI endorsement training for educators and administrators in school year 2015-2016, with a goal of 90 percent of teachers being trained by the end of the school year (up from approximately 45 percent currently). Conduct targeted reviews of central special education services and school-level programs, identifying key areas for continued redesign and professional development by winter 2015. Expand the number of schools with access to consistent high-quality enrichment opportunities and participation in district-wide enrichment showcases by spring 2016. Drive increased family engagement through the Family Welcome Center and new planned events for LPS families, including student transition ceremonies and showcases by summer 2016.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autonomy and Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create template for school factsheets, which examine student achievement data, school program quality, teacher satisfaction, and other measures, by fall 2015. Continue to ensure appropriate school-level support (e.g., coaches, mentors, site visits) is assigned to schools to address specific areas for improvement. Expand progress monitoring site visits by third-parties to additional Level 3 schools by winter 2016 to inform schools' development needs and to support their process of continuous improvement. Develop new detailed school district policies and procedures manual to reflect open architecture model, including clear and detailed explanation of role of central office and district-wide policies in school year 2015-2016. Complete discussions and processes with remaining unions regarding new collective bargaining agreements by summer 2016. In school year 2015-2016, begin a comprehensive facilities review concentrated on selected neighborhoods with growing enrollment.

APPENDIX A: REQUIRED TERMS FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, §1K, the Commissioner and the Receiver must create a turnaround plan intended to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in the district. The Commissioner and the Receiver will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the turnaround plan. Among other things, the Commissioner and the Receiver may: reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the district; provide funds to increase the salary of an administrator or teacher working in an underperforming school in order to attract or retain highly qualified administrators or teachers, or to reward administrators or teachers who work in chronically underperforming districts that have achieved the annual goals in the turnaround plan; expand the school day or school year or both of schools in the district; limit, suspend or change one or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement in the district; limit, suspend, or change one or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices relate to the underperforming schools in the district; provide job-embedded professional development for teachers in the district; provide for increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction; and establish steps to assure a continuum of high-expertise teachers by aligning hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture and organizational structure with the common core of professional knowledge and skill.

The Receiver has settled three of the district's ten collective bargaining agreements which expired in 2010 or 2011 and has settled a collective bargaining agreement with a newly recognized bargaining unit. The collective bargaining agreements settled include those with the teachers and nurses, the public safety officers, and the school-based and long-term substitute teachers. Negotiations are ongoing with the remaining bargaining units with expired collective bargaining agreements, with the exception of two, for which negotiations are planned to begin shortly after the end of this school year.

The Receiver negotiated an historic collective bargaining agreement with the Lawrence Teachers' Union lasting through June 30, 2017. This collective bargaining agreement includes meaningful participation by teachers in a comprehensive, school-based planning process to establish school-level working conditions, a new performance-based career ladder compensation system, and a novel dispute resolution process to provide for the enforcement of the terms of the collective bargaining agreement while preserving the Receiver's authority. Future collective bargaining agreements with all bargaining units will contain terms that are consistent with the requirements of the turnaround plan as described below.

The terms outlined below are necessary to the successful implementation of the turnaround plan and reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, working rules, and any practices or policies pursuant to the expired collective bargaining agreements. These terms will take effect July 1, 2012, and must be included in any future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver reserves the right to make additional changes to collective bargaining agreements as needed. Nothing contained in the turnaround plan or the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as they are provided for under G.L. c.69, §1K.

I. **Receiver**

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K, the Receiver for the Lawrence Public Schools is vested with all the powers of the superintendent and the school committee. Wherever a reference in a collective bargaining agreement is made to the "school committee" or the "superintendent," it will be interpreted to mean the "Receiver."

II. **Management Rights**

Nothing contained in the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as provided in G.L. c. 69, s. 1K.

III. **Collaboration before Decisions**

Each principal will devise, in consultation with school staff, a collaborative process through which the principal will consult with school staff, receiving and considering their input and sharing his/her reasoning with them, before making decisions affecting staff, in areas such as: the establishment and selection criteria for teaching, classroom, administrative, professional and per session assignments; after-school positions; staff schedules; the length and number of periods; school safety, implementation of discipline, behavior management plans and procedures; curriculum implementation; and professional development. School/district management retain the ultimate discretion to implement decisions as they determine in the best interest of achieving the goals of the Turnaround Plan.

IV. **Performance-Based Compensation System**

The Receiver developed a new performance-based compensation system (PBCS), after discussion with the union, which contains a career path and which compensates employees based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth.

Teachers from within and outside of the Lawrence Public Schools, who are selected as Sontag Prize winners, may also be eligible to serve in the vacation Acceleration Academies. Teachers serving in the vacation Acceleration Academies will be paid a \$3,000 or \$4,000 bonus; the bonus will be subject to taxes and/or withholdings, will not be added to the base salary, and will not be counted towards salary for retirement calculation purposes.

V. **Teaching & Learning Time**

Professional Obligations

Teachers and other professional staff shall devote whatever time is required to achieve and maintain high quality education in the Lawrence Public Schools. For example, unless formally excused, teachers and other professional staff shall participate in all regular school functions during or outside of the normal school day, including faculty meetings, parent conferences, department meetings, curriculum meetings, graduations, and other similar activities. Teachers will also be afforded regular preparatory time during their work week. Such preparatory time may include common planning periods and professional development.

School Schedules

Current daily school schedules will be continued except as approved or required by the Receiver. The Receiver may approve any school's strong plan for expanding learning time, including plans for extended time for Level 4 schools as reflected in their School Redesign Grant applications.

Each elementary and middle school's program shall be a minimum of 1,330 hours per school year. In school year 2015-2016, high school hours will be increased beginning with the 9th Grade Academy.

Each principal will engage in a planning process involving the faculty and staff, parents, students, and members of the community to develop a new school schedule based on student needs and school and community assets. Each plan will address how learning time will support: (1) high academic success, especially through personalized support and learning; (2) a well-rounded education that may include subjects not part of standardized testing; activities such as arts, music, drama, robotics, and sports; and social/emotional learning; and (3) expanded time for teachers to collaborate, use student data, and develop their practice. Plans should be creative with regard to the use of adaptive software, staggered teacher schedules, acceleration academies, summer learning and enrichment programs, and outside partners. Each plan must address opportunities to incorporate community partners and resources and must include an appropriate and sustainable arrangement about teacher and staff responsibilities, hours, and compensation. The

principal will recommend the plan to the Receiver after consultation with the faculty and staff of the school. The Receiver may require the inclusion of any reasonable exceptions to these provisions and may require changes in any plan to best serve the interests of the students. Plans will be approved at the Receiver's discretion.

School Calendar

The Receiver will establish the school calendar each year. The calendar will provide for the school year to begin during the last full week of the month of August. A two-week winter break will overlap the end/beginning of the calendar year, and there will be a one week break during February and a one week break during April. The Receiver may approve an alternate calendar at the request of a school principal, if the principal and the Receiver determine that the alternate calendar is in the best interests of the students in the school.

VI. Evaluation

Teachers and administrators shall be evaluated according to the Lawrence Public School District's adaptation of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education model system.

VII. Staffing

In filling positions, principals have the authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates without regard to seniority.

The Receiver has the right to lay off teachers and other district staff because of reductions in force or reorganizations resulting from declining enrollment or other budgetary or operational reasons. The Receiver will establish the selection criteria for layoffs of teachers and other district staff. Such selection criteria may include, but are not limited to: qualifications, licensure, work history, multiple measures of student learning, operational need, and the best interests of the students. Where all other factors are equal, seniority may be used as the deciding factor.

The Receiver has the right to reassign teachers and other staff who have been displaced from their positions. After discussion with the affected teacher or staff member, the teacher or staff member may be assigned to any open position for which he/ she is qualified. If the teacher or staff member is not assigned to a mutually agreeable position, the Receiver will assign the teacher or staff member to a position for which he/she is qualified. Such an assignment may include instructional support, substitute teaching, or administrative tasks.

VIII. Dismissal

In schools declared underperforming or chronically underperforming, teachers with professional teacher status and all represented district staff that have completed their probationary period may be dismissed for good cause.

IX. Handling New Issues

Any changes which the Receiver deems necessary to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic performance of Lawrence students may be implemented after a ten-day period of consultation with the appropriate union. These changes may be implemented at the Receiver's discretion, consistent with G.L. c. 69, s. 1K.

APPENDIX B: MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS*

Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2013- 2014 Baseline	SY 2014- 2015 Target	SY 2015- 2016 Target	SY 2016- 2017 Target	SY 2017- 2018 Target
(1) student attendance, dismissal rates, and exclusion rates	Attendance Rate (Increase)	93.0%	93.6%	94.2%	94.8%	95.4%
	Percentage of Students Chronically Absent (Decrease)	18.4%	16.9%	15.3%	13.8%	12.2%
	Dismissal Rate (Decrease)	8%	8%	7%	6%	5%
	Out-of-School Suspension Rate (Decrease)	5.7%	5.2%	4.7%	4.3%	3.9%
	In-School Suspension Rate (Decrease)	3.1%	2.9%	2.6%	2.4%	2.1%
	Percentage of Students Suspended for more than 10 days (replaces Exclusion rate)	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%
(2) student safety and discipline	Interpersonal incidents** (Decrease)	427	391	356	320	285
	Weapons incidents (Decrease)	25	23	21	19	17
	Incidents of substance possession/use/intent to sell (Decrease)	37	33	30	27	24
	Incidents of theft/vandalism (Decrease)	93	85	77	70	62
	Number of threats made (Decrease)	343	314	286	257	228
(3) student promotion and drop-out rates	Retention Rate (Decrease)	3.3%	3.0%	2.8%	2.5%	2.2%
	Drop-out Rate – Aggregate (Decrease)	4.6%	4.2%	3.8%	3.5%	3.1%
	Drop-out Rate – High-Needs Students (Decrease)	4.1%	3.8%	3.4%	3.1%	2.7%
(3b) graduation rates	Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate - High-Needs Students (Increase)	66.7%	69.5%	72.3%	75.0%	77.8%
	Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate - Aggregate (Increase)	66.9%	69.7%	72.4%	75.2%	77.9%
	Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rate - High Needs Students (Increase)	66.9%	69.7%	72.4%	75.2%	77.9%
	Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rate - Aggregate (Increase)	66.8%	69.6%	72.3%	75.1%	77.9%
(4) student achievement on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System; (5) progress in areas of academic underperformance; (6) progress among subgroups of students, including low-income students as defined by Chapter 70, limited English proficient students and students with disabilities; (7) reduction of achievement gaps	ELA CPI - Aggregate (Increase)	72.9	75.2	77.4	79.7	81.9
	ELA CPI - High-Needs Students (Increase)	72.1	74.4	76.8	79.1	81.4
	ELA CPI - English language learners (Increase)	57.7	61.2	64.8	68.3	71.8
	ELA CPI - Students with Disabilities (Increase)	55.7	59.4	63.1	66.8	70.5
	Math CPI - Aggregate (Increase)	69.1	71.7	74.3	76.8	79.4
	Math CPI - High Needs Students (Increase)	68.5	71.1	73.8	76.4	79.0
	Math CPI - English language learners (Increase)	59.1	62.5	65.9	69.3	72.7
	Math CPI - Students with Disabilities (Increase)	51	55.1	59.2	63.3	67.3
	Science CPI - Aggregate (Increase)	58.1	61.6	65.1	68.6	72.1
	Science CPI - High Needs Students (Increase)	57.3	60.9	64.4	68.0	71.5
	ELA MCAS W/F Percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	18.3%	16.8%	15.3%	13.7%	12.2%

Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2013- 2014 Baseline	SY 2014- 2015 Target	SY 2015- 2016 Target	SY 2016- 2017 Target	SY 2017- 2018 Target
among different groups of students	ELA MCAS W/F Percentage - High Needs Students (Decrease)	18.9%	17.3%	15.8%	14.2%	12.6%
	ELA MCAS W/F Percentage - English language learners (Decrease)	33.0%	30.3%	27.5%	24.8%	22.0%
	ELA MCAS W/F Percentage - Students with Disabilities (Decrease)	37.1%	34.0%	30.9%	27.8%	24.7%
	Math MCAS W/F Percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	24.0%	22.0%	20.0%	18.0%	16.0%
	Math MCAS W/F Percentage - High-Needs Students (Decrease)	24.7%	22.6%	20.6%	18.5%	16.5%
	Math MCAS W/F Percentage - English language learners (Decrease)	35.3%	32.4%	29.4%	26.5%	23.5%
	Math MCAS W/F Percentage - Students with Disabilities (Decrease)	47.2%	43.3%	39.3%	35.4%	31.5%
	Science MCAS W/F Percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	30.0%	27.5%	25.0%	22.5%	20.0%
	Science MCAS W/F Percentage - High-Needs Students (Decrease)	31.0%	28.4%	25.8%	23.3%	20.7%
	ELA MCAS Advanced Percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	5.1%	6.0%	6.8%	7.7%	8.5%
	ELA MCAS Advanced Percentage - High-Needs Students (Increase)	4.8%	5.6%	6.4%	7.2%	8.0%
	Math MCAS Advanced Percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	15.3%	17.9%	20.4%	23.0%	25.5%
	Math MCAS Advanced Percentage - High-Needs Students (Increase)	14.6%	17.0%	19.5%	21.9%	24.3%
	Science MCAS Advanced Percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	3.0%	3.5%	4.0%	4.5%	5.0%
	Science MCAS Advanced Percentage - High-Needs Students (Increase)	2.8%	3.3%	3.7%	4.2%	4.7%
	ELA Median SGP - Aggregate (Increase)	52	51	51	51	51
	ELA Median SGP - High-Needs Students (Increase)	52	51	51	51	51
	ELA Median SGP - English language learners (Increase)	59	51	51	51	51
	ELA Median SGP - Students with Disabilities (Increase)	41	51	51	51	51
	Math Median SGP - Aggregate (Increase)	57	51	51	51	51
	Math Median SGP - High-Needs Students (Increase)	57	51	51	51	51
	Math Median SGP - English language learners (Increase)	56	51	51	51	51
	Math Median SGP - Students with Disabilities (Increase)	45	51	51	51	51
(8) Student acquisition and mastery of twenty-first century skills	Percentage of high school graduates completing MassCore requirements (Increase)	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
(9) Development of college readiness, including at the elementary and middle school levels	Percentage of high school students achieving college readiness benchmark score on PSAT/PLAN (Increase)	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
	Increase number of students passing at least one AP course by 10% annually while maintaining an AP course passing rate of at least 90%	268	295	324	357	392
	ELA, Math, Science Aggregate CPI in Grades 5, 8 and 10 (Increase)	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
(10) Parent and Family Engagement	Percentage of families who agree that the district and/or school successfully informs, engages, and involves families (Increase)	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2013- 2014 Baseline	SY 2014- 2015 Target	SY 2015- 2016 Target	SY 2016- 2017 Target	SY 2017- 2018 Target
(11) Building a Culture of Academic Success Among Students	Percentage of students who agree that their school has qualities associated with a rigorous learning environment (Increase)	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
(12) Building a culture of student support and success among school faculty and staff	Percentage of teachers who agree that their school has attributes of an effective model for student support and success (Increase)	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
(13) Developmentally appropriate child assessments from pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade	Percentage of students Pre-K-grade 3 who are given a developmentally appropriate assessment (Increase)	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

*Note that goals are subject to change based on PARCC implementation decisions and timelines. For the majority of measureable annual goals 8-13, school year 2014-2015 data will be used to determine the baseline.

APPENDIX C: BUDGET INFORMATION

Lawrence Public Schools General Fund Budget

School/Department	FY15 Budget	FY16 Budget	FY15 FTE	FY16 FTE
Early Childhood Centers				
Breen School	\$2,119,826	\$2,244,719	38.0	42.0
Lawlor School	\$1,180,300	\$1,300,505	20.5	24.5
Rollins School	\$1,627,410	\$1,717,663	33.5	35.5
Lawrence Family Public Academy	\$1,917,621	\$1,749,803	33.0	27.0
Primary/Elementary Schools				
Community Day Arlington	\$4,909,011	\$5,078,957	87.0	88.0
Frost Elementary	\$3,536,247	\$3,717,867	56.9	59.9
Guilmette Elementary	\$3,875,231	\$4,019,212	65.0	65.0
Hennessey Primary School	\$2,707,300	\$2,798,848	47.0	48.0
Leahy School	\$3,683,347	\$3,783,909	58.0	59.0
Oliver Partnership	\$3,351,249	\$3,428,586	51.0	51.0
Parthum Elementary	\$4,005,838	\$4,177,486	64.0	65.0
Tarbox School	\$2,455,231	\$2,527,900	41.0	41.0
South Lawrence East Elementary	\$3,638,197	\$4,255,175	58.3	67.3
Middle Schools				
Arlington Middle	\$3,631,838	\$3,765,272	57.5	57.5
Frost Middle	\$3,414,856	\$3,486,380	52.0	52.0
Guilmette Middle	\$4,084,024	\$4,150,515	63.5	63.5
Parthum Middle	\$3,456,313	\$3,546,113	53.0	53.0
Spark Academy	\$2,736,227	\$3,368,750	48.8	59.7
South Lawrence East Middle	\$1,310,060	\$0	21.3	0.0
UP Academy Leonard	\$2,856,892	\$3,084,910	49.0	49.0
UP Academy Oliver	\$3,069,327	\$3,039,712	52.0	52.0
K-8 Schools				
Bruce School	\$4,201,440	\$4,322,632	67.0	67.0
Wetherbee School	\$4,950,028	\$5,121,166	77.0	79.0
High Schools				
Lawrence High School Campus	\$22,309,701	\$25,280,479	352.4	397.0
Alternative Schools				
High School Learning Center	\$1,802,684	\$1,877,587	28.5	28.5
Phoenix Academy	\$2,025,217	\$1,945,305	27.5	27.5
School for Exceptional Studies	\$4,957,076	\$5,049,778	105.5	105.5

Adult Education

Adult Learning Center	\$905,884	\$957,523	14.5	14.5
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Central Departments

Superintendent's Office & Administration	\$1,008,658	\$970,890	5.0	5.0
Academic Services	\$1,408,099	\$1,069,405	12.4	8.9
Pupil Services	\$12,772,621	\$12,869,386	103.5	103.5
ELL Services	\$210,000	\$210,000	2.0	2.0
Community, Family & Student Engagement	\$997,419	\$1,009,544	10.0	10.0
Intramurals	\$189,194	\$189,194	0.0	0.0
Operations	\$1,621,188	\$1,170,474	3.0	3.0
Talent Services	\$1,021,953	\$699,739	4.0	3.0
Budget & Finance	\$26,679,383	\$27,850,885	13.0	13.0
Human Resources	\$3,414,030	\$3,469,078	8.0	7.0
Information Technology	\$2,651,186	\$2,681,774	7.0	6.0
LPS Media	\$137,150	\$137,150	3.0	3.0
School Safety	\$570,134	\$576,967	3.5	3.5
Facilities	\$3,169,875	\$3,174,333	9.0	9.0
Transportation	\$6,886,283	\$8,071,015	1.5	1.5

Grand Total	\$167,455,547	\$173,946,585	1907.7	1957.3
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Lawrence Public Schools Projected Grant Revenue

Source	FY2015	FY2016	Variance	% Change
Recurring Grants				
Title I/IIA	\$8,835,402	\$8,601,579	-\$233,823	-2.6%
IDEA	\$3,577,266	\$3,613,039	\$35,773	1.0%
Title III	\$698,419	\$698,419	\$0	0.0%
Title III Immig.	\$152,900	\$145,255	-\$7,645	-5.0%
Full day KDG	\$456,900	\$0	-\$456,900	-100.0%
Adult Education	\$670,504	\$663,799	-\$6,705	-1.0%
Subtotal: Recurring Grants	\$14,391,391	\$13,722,090	-\$669,301	-4.7%
One-time Grants				
Race to the Top	\$1,247,040	\$0	-\$1,247,040	-100.0%
SRG (INT, BMF, UPL, SPK)	\$1,668,934	\$0	-\$1,668,934	-100.0%
SRG (OPS, UPO)	\$754,960	\$754,960	\$0	0.0%
ELT (GLM)	\$415,200	\$415,200	\$0	0.0%
21st CC (WET)	\$340,000	\$340,000	\$0	0.0%
21st CC (OST)	\$335,994	\$0	-\$335,994	-100.0%
21st CC Summer	\$102,749	\$102,749	\$0	0.0%
21st CC (ARM/GUI/PRT)	\$404,000	\$404,000	\$0	0.0%
Preschool Expansion Grant	\$0	\$2,351,250	\$2,351,250	100.0%
Mass Grad	\$131,250	\$0	-\$131,250	-100.0%
Academic Support	\$114,000	\$100,000	-\$14,000	-12.3%
Project Focus	\$72,500	\$0	-\$72,500	-100.0%
SPED PD	\$72,071	\$0	-\$72,071	-100.0%
Early childhood SPED	\$62,301	\$0	-\$62,301	-100.0%
Breakfast expansion	\$22,394	\$0	-\$22,394	-100.0%
K-12 Literacy PD	\$19,167	\$0	-\$19,167	-100.0%
MCC Stars	\$10,000	\$0	-\$10,000	-100.0%
White Fund	\$3,364	\$3,364	\$0	0.0%
Working Cities Challenge	\$160,600	\$160,600	\$0	0.0%
NCTL	\$50,000	\$0	-\$50,000	-100.0%
Prone Family Foundation	\$25,469	\$25,469	\$0	0.0%
ETP Ed Telecomm/Comcast	\$538,423	\$538,423	\$0	0.0%
ETP Ed Telecomm/Verizon	\$254,807	\$254,807	\$0	0.0%
Subtotal: One-time Grants	\$6,805,223	\$5,450,822	-\$1,354,401	-19.9%
Grand Total	\$21,196,614	\$19,172,912	-\$2,023,702	-9.5%

*Does not include school lunch

Holyoke Public Schools Level 5 District Turnaround Plan

October 1, 2015



October 1, 2015

Students, families, educators, staff, partners, community members, and friends of the Holyoke Public Schools:

We are excited to share with you the following plan for turning around the Holyoke Public Schools.

Throughout the spring and summer, we listened carefully to the input you provided at informal venues such as the Community Conversations/*las Conversaciones con la Comunidad*, through your feedback on the Receiver's entry plan, and through more formal processes such as the Local Stakeholder Group recommendations. By considering your input along with information from other sources, we have prepared this turnaround plan for the district. Thank you for your many inspiring ideas for how we can make the Holyoke Public Schools a district that prepares every student to succeed. As you will read in the following pages, our purpose is to promote rapid improvement, for the benefit of all Holyoke students. We will create new opportunities for student learning while building on the promising practices and programs that already exist in the district.

Throughout the plan, we focus on the following critical action steps to implement Holyoke's turnaround:

- Build on what is working and fix what is not working
- Empower staff to make decisions while holding them accountable for results
- Extend time to increase learning opportunities, for both students and staff
- Provide students with individualized college and/or career plans and multiple pathways to reach their full potential
- Invest partners' knowledge and skills strategically
- Engage families as active partners, repairing relationships and building trust in the district

At the core of this plan is our firm belief that *all* Holyoke students deserve a world-class education. For too long, too many Holyoke students have not received a high-quality education or were allowed to fail. This is unacceptable. While many of Holyoke's students and families face distinct challenges, these are not an excuse but rather a reminder that the district must do more to provide a strong educational program for each and every student. With this plan, we will raise the bar by improving the instruction and services we offer, and provide students with

the skills and tools they need to be successful in school now, and later in college and their careers.

The strategies in the pages that follow will require considerable planning, discussion, and community participation to be effective. We are committed to keeping you informed. Please continue to find information and learn about opportunities to get involved on the Holyoke Public Schools website (<http://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/>) and through other district communications. Together we will achieve great things for the students of Holyoke.

The transformation of Holyoke from a district where an excellent education is the exception to a district where excellence is the rule will not happen overnight. The plan provides information about how we will measure our progress along the way. Your active participation will be critical as we expand learning opportunities during the coming years. We look forward to partnering with you and encourage you to read the turnaround plan.

Sincerely,

Signed by Receiver Zrike

Stephen Zrike
Receiver
Holyoke Public Schools

Signed by Commissioner Chester

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner
Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Executive Summary

In April 2015, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to designate the Holyoke Public Schools chronically underperforming (Level 5), placing the district in state receivership. In July 2015, by appointment of Commissioner Mitchell Chester, Stephen Zrike became the Receiver of the Holyoke Public Schools. The receivership provides the opportunity for a significant, sustained district turnaround in Holyoke.

At the core of this plan is the firm belief that *all* Holyoke students deserve a world-class education. For too long, many Holyoke students have not received a high-quality education or were allowed to fail. With this plan, we will raise the bar, improve the instruction and services we offer, and provide students with the skills and tools they need to be successful in school now, and later in college and their careers.

Central to the turnaround plan are the educators¹ who are charged with transforming the district from one of low performance to one in which student achievement is consistently strong. Job one is ensuring that we employ an effective teacher in every classroom and that effective administrators lead our schools. To accomplish this, the district will implement strategies to retain high-performing staff and to recruit new talent to Holyoke, to ensure that all students receive strong instruction, interventions, and supports in every classroom, every day.

Throughout the plan, we focus on the following critical action steps to implement Holyoke's turnaround:

- Build on what is working and fix what is not working
- Empower staff to make decisions while holding them accountable for results
- Extend time to increase learning opportunities, for both students and staff
- Provide students with individualized college and/or career plans and multiple pathways to reach their full potential
- Invest partners' knowledge and skills strategically
- Engage families as active partners, repairing relationships and building trust in the district

¹ In this turnaround plan, the term "educator" means teachers, administrators, and other professional staff.

The Holyoke Public Schools will be a system of great schools that prepares its students for college and careers by challenging them to think critically and by providing safe, nurturing, culturally relevant environments in which they can learn and grow. The district's efforts will include a special emphasis on reengaging disconnected or at-risk youth, to bring them back into the system and provide them with academic and other necessary supports. The district will invest all its human, financial, and other resources in strategies that support students' learning, reallocating resources where appropriate from the central office to schools, in direct support of students. Guided by a central office designed to effectively support schools at all grade levels, the district's educators will participate in making school-level decisions that are tailored to their students. The Holyoke Public Schools will be a service-oriented district, truly welcoming and engaging families as active participants in students' education, and focused on building families' trust in the school system.

To achieve rapid improvement of academic achievement for all Holyoke's students, the district will implement strategies in five Priority Areas. These Priority Areas are aligned with the recommendations of the Holyoke Level 5 district Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) that were submitted to Commissioner Chester and Receiver Zrike on July 10, 2015, and are based on *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*.² The guide presents key turnaround practices to be considered by state leaders, districts, schools, and policymakers striving to improve and sustain ongoing and future turnaround efforts.

The Holyoke Level 5 district turnaround plan Priority Areas include:

- Priority Area 1: Provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Priority Area 2: Establish focused practices for improving instruction.
- Priority Area 3: Create a climate and culture that support students and engage families.
- Priority Area 4: Develop leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration.
- Priority Area 5: Organize the district for successful turnaround.

Holyoke's turnaround will include concentrated efforts to improve its lowest performing schools: William J. Dean Vocational Technical High School (Level 4); Morgan Full Service Community School (Level 5); and schools at risk of falling into Level 4 status.

² Lane, B., Unger, C., and Souvanna, P. (2014). *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*. Baltimore, MD: Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning. See [Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis](#). This document is based on a detailed analysis of the experience of the initial 34 underperforming (Level 4) schools during the first 3 years of turnaround (2010–2011 to 2012–2013).

The Receiver and the Commissioner will monitor these Priority Areas closely, to ensure that strategies are being implemented effectively and are yielding the desired results. Changes will be made as needed to ensure that these strategies are having the desired impact on students' learning. Holyoke will invest its resources in strategies and tools that maximize student achievement; where strategies and tools do not demonstrate an impact on student learning, funds will be reallocated.

As a high-need and low-income community, Holyoke must ensure that its use of resources results in increased student learning. Staffing costs account for the bulk of expenditures in the school district's budget. The district must ensure that those expenditures are made in the most effective manner to increase student learning; therefore, principals will have the authority to ensure that the most effective staff are selected and retained. In turn, professional learning and staff support are essential investments in staff. In every budget, the district will curtail expenditures that do not directly support the priorities identified in the turnaround plan, and reallocate funds and staff positions for more productive uses.

For the last several years, district administrators have had to cut personnel and non-personnel lines to balance the budget, and look to reorganization and reallocation to make funds available for key improvement initiatives. Some funding constraints of fiscal year 2017 are already known, so the challenge of fully implementing turnaround initiatives is to continue with reorganization and reallocation that prioritizes adequate funding for instruction.

The Commissioner and the Receiver will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the turnaround plan. Ensuring that great schools are available for all of Holyoke's students will not happen overnight. Decades of decline have led to Holyoke's chronic underperformance. The strategies in the following pages will require considerable planning, discussion, and community participation in order for them to be effective. The plan includes information about how we will measure our progress along the way. The district will exit from receivership once gains are sufficient and positive change has been institutionalized to ensure continued growth and sustainable results.

Summary of Key Issues and Priority Areas

Background

In March 2015, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) reviewed and discussed ESE's 2015 District Review Report about the Holyoke Public Schools (HPS). The report described a district that ranked at or near the bottom of the state on nearly every academic and non-academic indicator. "Student achievement and growth in the Holyoke Public Schools are among the lowest in the state overall and for student subgroups...From 2011 to 2014, student academic achievement and growth declined in nearly every grade and subject."³ In addition to the 2015 Holyoke District Review Report, BESE was concerned about the history of underperformance that showed that the district's proficiency rates in English language arts (ELA), math, and science were all significantly below the state rate for the district as a whole and in each tested grade. The district's four-year graduation rate was also significantly below the state rate, with its drop-out rate notably above the state rate. BESE also reviewed the extensive history of accountability and assistance that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has provided to HPS, including support in planning, implementation, and funding of turnaround efforts for Holyoke's district and school improvement strategies. After providing an opportunity for community input on April 27, 2015, at the recommendation of Commissioner Mitchell Chester, BESE voted to designate the Holyoke Public Schools chronically underperforming (Level 5) on April 28, 2015, placing the district into state receivership.

This state receivership provides an important opportunity for a significant, sustained district turnaround in Holyoke. Under state receivership, the governance of the district has been streamlined, with all operational powers of the superintendent and school committee held by the district's receiver. In July 2015, by appointment of Commissioner Chester, Stephen Zrike became the Receiver of the Holyoke Public Schools.

Findings

As of April 2015, when BESE voted to declare HPS chronically underperforming (Level 5), the district had a long history of difficulty in providing the appropriate systems and structures to ensure that all students are able to achieve. Some of the key findings from the District Review Report include the following:

- Graduation and drop-out rates: Despite improvement from a 2011 rate of 49.5 percent, in 2014, the district's four-year cohort graduation rate was 60.2 percent, 25.9 percentage points below the state rate of 86.1 percent. The annual drop-out rate for

³ See the [Holyoke Public Schools District Review Report](#), p. 15. Click F–J (next to District Review Reports) and scroll to the Holyoke 2015 District Review Report.

Holyoke has consistently been more than three times higher than the state rate, and was 6.4 percent in 2014, significantly above the statewide rate of 2.0 percent.

- Low proficiency rates: ELA, math, and science proficiency rates in 2014 were significantly below the state rates for the district as a whole and in each tested grade. ELA proficiency rates for all students in the district were 34 percent in 2011 and 32 percent in 2014, 37 percentage points below the 2014 state rate of 69 percent. Math proficiency rates in the district were 27 percent in 2011 and 28 percent in 2014, 32 percentage points below the state rate of 60 percent. And grade 5 science proficiency rates were 11 percent in 2011 and 9 percent in 2014, 44 percentage points below the state rate of 53 percent. Proficiency rates varied considerably among schools, indicating wide disparities in students' educational experiences from school to school. Holyoke's highest performing school, Sullivan, was in the 21st percentile of elementary/middle schools, with a cumulative Progress and Performance Index of 41 for all students; the target is 75.
- Low levels of student achievement, particularly for subgroups: Based on statewide 2014 accountability results, 8 of Holyoke's 9 schools with a sufficient amount of data to report were in the lowest performing 20 percent of schools in their grade spans, with William J. Dean Vocational Technical High School (Dean) and Morgan Full Service Community School (Morgan) in the lowest 5 percent of schools in their respective grade spans statewide. Holyoke's schools also have subgroups that are among the lowest performing subgroups statewide. For instance, as a group, English language learners (ELLs) at White Elementary School are among the lowest performing in the state, and students with disabilities at Holyoke High School have shown persistently low graduation rates.
- Attendance and suspension rates: The 2013–2014 student out-of-school suspension rate, at 20.0 percent per year, was more than 5 times higher than the state average of 3.9 percent; this continued a trend dating back to 2003 in which at least 1 in 5 Holyoke students received an out-of-school suspension each year. Holyoke students on average were absent 13.8 days in the 2013–2014 school year, as compared with a state average of 8.7 days. This represented the eighth consecutive year in which the average number of days missed for students in Holyoke exceeded the state by at least five days per year.
- Accountability status: Of Holyoke's 11 schools, Dean was previously designated underperforming (Level 4) for being among the lowest achieving and least improving schools in the Commonwealth; and Morgan was designated chronically underperforming (Level 5) in October 2013 for its continued decline during its 3 years of Level 4 status, making it one of the first schools in the Commonwealth to be placed in receivership.

- Low levels of student growth: On the 2014 MCAS assessments, the districtwide median student growth percentile (SGP) for ELA was 39; for mathematics, it was 45. Growth rates have been similarly low over the past four years. The statewide median SGP in both content areas is 50; these SGPs indicate Holyoke students' growth on the MCAS assessments on average is slower than that of their academic peers statewide. This means that students who already are behind are losing further ground compared with their peers.

Systemic Challenges

The district review findings and other data indicated that the district had multiple systemic challenges that impeded its ability to accelerate and support students' academic performance. At the time of the district's Level 5 designation in April 2015, some of the challenges as noted by the district review team included:

- Inconsistent instructional quality: The quality of instruction across Holyoke varied school to school and classroom to classroom, with inconsistent implementation of standards-based, rigorous instructional tools and materials. During school year 2014–2015, the district's 5 specific instructional practices⁴ were in their initial states of implementation and were not embedded in instruction at the classroom level. During observations conducted by the district review team, the quality of instruction was inconsistent and did not demonstrate mastery implementation of the district's instructional practices. The review team did not see clear and consistent evidence of rigorous lessons and high expectations for students in half of classrooms districtwide. Notably, observers saw evidence of instructional modifications that would enhance learning by Holyoke's students with disabilities and ELLs in only 35 percent of classrooms.
- Incomplete assessment system: The district did not have in place a complete system of formative assessments, and different schools were using different types of assessments, administered at inconsistent frequencies across the district. As of the end of school year 2014–2015, the assessment system had not been completed. The absence of a comprehensive assessment system limited educators from using assessment data to improve instruction and tailor supports to students' needs.
- Challenges at the secondary level: Holyoke's two high schools were not consistently preparing all students for college and careers. As stated above, Holyoke's four-year cohort graduation rate was only 60.2 percent in 2014, more than 25 percentage points below the state rate, and its drop-out rate was more than 3 times higher than the state

⁴ In school year 2014–2015, Holyoke identified 5 instructional practices on which it would focus: 1) student discourse, 2) vocabulary, 3) close reading, 4) text-based questions, and 5) school-specific climate and culture strategies (to be determined by school leaders).

rate. The district did not have a strategic, coordinated series of activities and supports to prepare middle school students for high school and lay the foundation for college and careers.

- Absence of leadership opportunities for teachers and other staff: The district had not developed a variety of opportunities for teachers or other staff to serve in leadership roles that benefit individual schools and the district as a whole. Teachers had little direct participation or formal collaboration in the overall planning, design, or implementation of professional development programs and services at the district level. For example, teachers had previously served on the district's professional development committee, but there were no teacher representatives in school year 2014–2015. Non-teaching staff may have had even fewer opportunities to contribute in leadership roles.

Vision

The Holyoke Public Schools will be a system of great schools that prepares its students for college and careers by challenging them to think critically and by providing safe, nurturing, culturally relevant environments in which they can learn and grow. The district will invest all its human, financial, and other resources in strategies that support students' learning. Guided by a central office designed to effectively support schools at all grade levels, the district's educators will be empowered to make school-level decisions that are tailored to their students. The Holyoke Public Schools will be a service-oriented district, truly welcoming and engaging families as active participants in students' education.

Throughout this plan, we will focus on the following critical action steps to implement Holyoke's turnaround:

- Build on what is working and fix what is not working
- Empower staff to make decisions while holding them accountable for results
- Extend time to increase learning opportunities, for both students and staff
- Provide students with individualized college and/or career plans and multiple pathways to reach their full potential
- Invest partners' knowledge and skills strategically
- Engage families as active partners, repairing relationships and building trust in the district

Turnaround Practices

An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap, signed into law in 2010, provides authority and tools for school and district leaders and the Commissioner and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to bring about rapid improvement in schools and districts that are underperforming (Level 4) and chronically underperforming (Level 5). In support of this work, ESE engaged The

Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning (INSTLL, LLC) to track the progress of Massachusetts' underperforming schools once they were in turnaround status, and identify lessons learned from the schools that made significant achievement gains during their first three years of turnaround, including the district systems and resources that supported them in their efforts. The result of this work is *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*,⁵ a document based on a detailed analysis of the experience of the initial 34 Level 4 schools during the first 3 years of turnaround (2010–2011 to 2012–2013). The guide presents key turnaround practices to be considered by state leaders, districts, schools, and policymakers striving to improve and sustain ongoing and future turnaround efforts.

Because the findings from the report indicate the types of supports necessary for effective and rapid acceleration, the Turnaround Practices serve as the basis for the Priority Areas of this turnaround plan.

Priority Areas

To achieve rapid improvement of academic achievement for all of Holyoke's students, the district will implement strategies in five Priority Areas that are aligned with the recommendations of the Holyoke Level 5 district Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) that were submitted to Commissioner Chester and Receiver Zrike on July 10, 2015.⁶ The plan identifies where strategies are informed by specific LSG recommendations.

Priority Area 1: Provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).

In order to achieve the rapid improvement of academic achievement for all Holyoke students, the district must provide high-quality instruction for all students in every classroom, every day. Students will experience a culture of high expectations with an instructional program designed to meet their needs and built upon the cultural and linguistic assets they bring to their education. The district will provide a strong system of high-quality core instruction, and tiered interventions in every school, for every grade level. In order to tailor educational strategies to meet students' needs and result in improved student learning, the district will collect, analyze, and share data among its educators and other staff. Holyoke's turnaround will be successful as it develops and implements comprehensive strategies to address the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities, both significant HPS populations.

⁵ See Lane, B., Unger, C., and Souvanna, P. (2014). *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*. Baltimore, MD: Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning. Retrieved from www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/default.html

⁶ See Appendix D for the Local Stakeholder Group's recommendations.

Priority Area 2: Establish focused practices for improving instruction.

HPS will design a districtwide early education and elementary program that builds a solid foundation for students' educational experiences. To significantly improve students' progress in later grades, the district will also design a secondary educational experience in grades 6–12 that provides students with individualized college and/or career plans and multiple pathways to reach their full potential, including a specific focus on the instructional program and student supports in the middle grades. The district will also build structures designed to support students who are not on track for on-time graduation. The district's efforts will include a special emphasis on reengaging disconnected or at-risk youth, to bring them back into the system and provide them with academic and other necessary supports. To support these focused practices, the district will ensure that Holyoke's educational tools and materials are high-quality and will prepare students with 21st century knowledge and skills.

Priority Area 3: Create a climate and culture that support students and engage families.

HPS will transform its culture into one of high standards and positive regard, and ensure that HPS schools provide environments that foster rapid improvement of academic achievement. District and school staff will work together to build all students' social/emotional skills to promote engagement, academic success, and college and career readiness. In order to develop school environments that foster strong academic achievement, HPS will develop structures and supports to identify and address holistically students' strengths and needs. The district will organize partner supports at schools and the central office to maximize partners' efforts and align them to the district's turnaround strategies. Finally, the district will engage families as active partners, repairing relationships and building trust in the school system.

Priority Area 4: Develop leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration.

Outstanding educators and staff are critical to the success of all components of this turnaround plan. Working together, Holyoke educators will implement high-quality instruction and be responsible for improved student achievement. Therefore, the district will ensure that Holyoke's educators and other staff have the knowledge and skills needed to drive student learning, growth, and achievement. The district will create opportunities to use the staff's expertise throughout the system to take on both informal and formal leadership roles in support of the turnaround. It will be necessary to develop and enhance systems and structures at the district and school levels designed to encourage and facilitate professional collaboration.

Finally, the district's employees will be evaluated through a streamlined, fair, and transparent process that provides all staff with feedback for improvement and opportunities for professional growth in both knowledge and skills.

Priority Area 5: Organize the district for successful turnaround.

The district will build robust systems to recruit, develop, and retain strong staff members and deploy them where they are most needed, motivating high-performing staff to remain in Holyoke and recruiting new talent to the district. The Receiver will grant autonomies so that school teams can tailor programs for their students' needs; school teams will be supported by the central office to use these autonomies effectively. HPS will develop and implement systems to maximize the use of existing school time and strategically add time where it is needed. The district's central office will be redesigned to ensure that it has the best structure for providing supports to the schools, and its systems will be revised or replaced as necessary to streamline district services and increase productivity and effectiveness. The district will invest its resources in strategies that lead to student achievement, and use the Receiver's authorities to lay the foundation for a successful turnaround. Finally, the district will help prepare the school committee to sustain change at the conclusion of receivership.

The Receiver and the Commissioner will monitor these Priority Areas closely, to ensure that strategies are being implemented effectively and are yielding the desired results; the Receiver will also designate high-level central office staff to monitor implementation effectiveness regularly. Changes will be made as needed to ensure that these strategies are having the desired impact on students' learning. The plan includes benchmarks within each Priority Area's section. For the turnaround plan's Measurable Annual Goals, see Appendix B.

Holyoke's Level 4 and Level 5 Schools

Holyoke's turnaround will include concentrated efforts to improve its lowest performing schools: Dean and Morgan. The Receiver is developing a tiered system of central office supports for all of the district's schools, with a special emphasis on the district's lowest performing schools. In addition to the resources the Receiver will provide to all Holyoke's schools, he also plans additional supports for these two schools.

Dean

In June 2010, Dean was designated underperforming (Level 4) accountability status by Commissioner Mitchell Chester. Dean was approved for three years of School Redesign Grant (SRG) funding in July 2011 to restart the school with a turnaround operator, Collaborative for Educational Services (CES). SRG funding was provided to the school for fiscal years 2012, 2013,

and 2014. In July 2013, a new turnaround operator, Project GRAD USA, partnered with the district to support Dean; this partnership concluded in June 2015. The school's original three-year turnaround plan has expired, and Dean remains in Level 4 status.

Dean, the only Level 4 school in the district, will receive focused support and assistance to promote the rapid improvement of academic achievement of its students. Dean's leadership team will receive frequent coaching, directly from the Receiver, with additional guidance provided by HPS's Director of Leadership Effectiveness; in school year 2015–2016, this coaching will focus on areas such as implementation of intervention blocks to provide supports for struggling students and using assessment data to improve teaching and learning. The Receiver, central office department heads, and other district staff will provide on-site observations of and expertise to the school to improve its instructional practices. The Receiver has already dedicated additional resources for Dean, such as funding for a literacy coach, a new position that will provide support to teachers. The district also plans to continue to invest in Dean's facility, such as by updating machinery and safety equipment. The Receiver has asked for state assistance and guidance about Dean's technical programs, ensuring that the programs are providing a solid foundation for students as they build their career knowledge and skills. The district will also partner with the Regional Employment Board, the Chamber of Commerce, and others to create Dean's schoolwide and program-specific advisory groups. As indicated in Priority Area 2, the district will review the career/vocational/technical education programs currently available to Holyoke's students, improve the quality of all programs that are retained, and consider additional programs---including regional and partnership options---aligned with the demand of the labor market and student interest. The Receiver will review any Memoranda of Agreement involving Dean, and will adjust those agreements as necessary to be consistent with the turnaround plan.

Morgan

In June 2010, Morgan was designated underperforming (Level 4) accountability status by Commissioner Mitchell Chester. Morgan was approved for three years of SRG funding in July 2011 under the federal transformation model. SRG funding was provided to the district for fiscal years 2012, 2013, and 2014. At the expiration of its three-year turnaround plan, based on its continued low performance and absence of improvement, Morgan was designated as a chronically underperforming (Level 5) school in October 2013. In January 2014, Commissioner Chester appointed Project GRAD USA as the receiver for Morgan, and in June 2014 a final version of the Morgan turnaround plan was issued. Following the Level 5 designation for the Holyoke Public Schools in April 2015, Stephen Zrike was appointed the district's Receiver, effective in July 2015. In his role as district Receiver, he became responsible for the

implementation of the turnaround plan for Morgan School; Project GRAD USA concluded its receivership work in June 2015.

Morgan, the only Level 5 school in the district, will receive focused support and assistance to promote the rapid improvement of academic achievement of its students. In addition to the ongoing school monitoring, technical assistance, and professional learning community supports that ESE will make available, a dedicated central office liaison ensures that questions and needs are addressed quickly. Morgan's leadership team will receive frequent coaching, directly from the Receiver, with additional guidance provided by a central office liaison. In school year 2015–2016, this coaching will focus on areas such as using student performance data to match supports to students' specific needs; developing systems to give meaningful feedback to teachers about their instructional practices; and identifying challenges to and necessary supports for the implementation of school priorities. The Receiver, central office department heads, and other district staff will provide on-site observations of and expertise to the school to improve its instruction. The school's turnaround plan provides for additional academic support staffing, including an ELA coach and a math coach full-time at the school; the school's schedule also allows for additional professional development and common planning time. The Receiver has also allocated additional resources to fund a Director of School Climate and Student Support as part of the school's Full Service Community School model, an investment designed to improve students' academic progress.

Strategic Use of District Resources

As a high-need and low-income community, Holyoke must ensure that its use of all its resources results in increased student learning, reallocating resources where appropriate from the central office to schools, in direct support of students. Holyoke's current per-student expenditures exceed a number of comparable districts. The district must ensure that those expenditures are made in the most effective manner to increase student learning; therefore, principals will have the authority to ensure that the most effective staff are selected and retained. In turn, professional learning and staff support are essential investments in staff. In every budget, the district must curtail expenditures that fail to demonstrate a relationship to strong student learning, and reallocate funds and staff positions to more productive uses.

For the last several years, district administrators have had to cut personnel and non-personnel lines to balance the budget, and look to reorganization and reallocation to make funds available for key improvement initiatives. Some funding constraints of fiscal year 2017 are already known, so the challenge of fully implementing turnaround initiatives is to continue with reorganization and reallocation that prioritizes adequate funding for instruction.

Statutory Basis for the Implementation of the Turnaround Plan

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, §1K, the Commissioner and the Receiver must create a turnaround plan intended to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in the district. The Commissioner and the Receiver will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the turnaround plan. Among other things, through the turnaround plan, the Commissioner and the Receiver may expand, alter or replace the curriculum and program offerings of the district; reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the district; provide funds to increase the salary of an administrator or teacher working in an underperforming school in order to attract or retain highly qualified administrators or teachers, or to reward administrators or teachers who work in chronically underperforming districts that have achieved the annual goals in the turnaround plan; expand the school day or school year or both of schools in the district; limit, suspend or change one or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement in the district; add pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten classes; following consultation with applicable local unions, require the principal and all administrators, teachers and staff to reapply for their positions; limit, suspend, or change one or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices relate to the underperforming schools in the district; provide job-embedded professional development for teachers in the district; provide increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction; establish a plan for professional development for administrators in the district; develop a strategy to search for and study best practices in areas of demonstrated deficiency in the district; establish strategies to address mobility and transiency among the student population of the district; and establish steps to assure a continuum of high-expertise teachers by aligning the following processes with the common core of professional knowledge and skill: hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture, and organizational structure.

Currently, the district's eight collective bargaining agreements have expired. The terms outlined in Appendix A are necessary to the successful implementation of the turnaround plan and reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, and working rules and to any practices or policies pursuant to the expired collective bargaining agreements. These terms will take effect as of the date of the release of the turnaround plan and must be included in any future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver will provide a summary of these changes to each union leader by approximately October 30, 2015. The Commissioner and the Receiver reserve the right to make additional changes to collective bargaining agreements as needed. Nothing contained in the turnaround plan or the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as they are provided for under G.L. c. 69, §1K.

The turnaround plan is authorized for a period of three years. The Commissioner and the Receiver may develop additional components of the plan or amend the plan, as appropriate. The district will exit from receivership once gains are sufficient and positive change has been institutionalized to ensure continued growth and sustainable results.

Priority Area 1: Provide High-Quality Instruction and Student-Specific Supports for All Students Including Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners.

Challenges

Holyoke schools have demonstrated a consistent pattern of persistent and pervasive low performance in ELA, mathematics, and science over the past four years. With few exceptions, most students in the Holyoke Public Schools are not performing at grade level in all tested subjects and performance for students with disabilities and English language learners is substantially lower than other students' performance. Research-based practices are not uniformly applied across the district, such as providing excellent core instruction and tiered supports, using inclusive practices, direct, explicit English language instruction (English as a Second Language, or ESL), and sheltering content for English Language Learners (ELLs).

Most of the classroom instruction observed during the Holyoke district review⁷ demonstrated the absence of rigorous instruction or engaging academic tasks aligned to the expectations and standards in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Further, the majority of classrooms did not implement a range of research-based instructional strategies, such as systematic checking for understanding or using data to identify and address students' individual needs.

During the 2015 district review, the majority of observed classrooms did not show consistent evidence of the use of appropriate instructional strategies for students with disabilities or for ELLs, including inclusive practices or sheltering content, to enable all students to improve proficiency. Although Holyoke's administrators have earned the SEI endorsement, not all teachers have met this requirement. For example, 28 percent⁸ of the core academic teachers who are required to be endorsed in Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) had not met that requirement by the end of school year 2014–2015. Student progress may be limited by the absence of trained teachers.

According to its most recent Coordinated Program Review,⁹ Holyoke's educators also have not received adequate training necessary for special education, resulting in inconsistent understanding and information about special education policy and practice across the district. This inconsistent understanding may have had an impact on student services and placements. For instance, the district's school year 2014–2015 data show that 26.3 percent of students with

⁷ See the [Holyoke Public Schools District Review Report](#), Appendix C. Click F-J next to District Review Reports and scroll to the Holyoke 2015 District Review Report.

⁸ These figures do not include teachers newly hired to the district in 2015–2016.

⁹ See the [Holyoke Public Schools 2013 Coordinated Program Review Report](#). Click English Language Learner (ELL) CPR Reports. Under Districts click H and scroll to Holyoke School District 2013.

IEPs were served in substantially separate placements, nearly double the state rate of 14.4 percent for that same period. Overall, 24.1 percent of Holyoke's students are identified as students with disabilities, compared to a range of 12.5-24.1 percent in other Gateway Cities in Massachusetts.¹⁰ Moreover, the district's 2014–2015 data identify 31.8 percent of the district's ELLs as students with disabilities, compared to 16.5 percent of ELLs statewide who are also students with disabilities. This percentage may indicate that the district may have difficulty determining when a student's performance is affected by language and culture rather than by a disability, thereby limiting the district's ability to provide appropriate services matched to these students' needs.

Rationale

In order to achieve rapid improvement for all Holyoke students, Holyoke Public Schools must effectively recruit, develop, and retain educators who will provide strong instruction, interventions, and supports for all students in every classroom, every day. Given the pervasively flat and extremely low performance in the district, programs and practices must be reviewed and changed as necessary to improve outcomes for students. Direct services to students, particularly ELLs and students with disabilities, must be increased. Students must experience a culture of high expectations with an instructional program designed to meet their needs and build on the cultural and linguistic assets they bring to their education. Educators and other staff throughout the district will be more effective when they are provided the tools, time, and support to meet the needs of Holyoke's students while holding each other accountable for continuing to improve outcomes. These foundational strategies are at the heart of successful teaching and learning and must be the district's urgent and immediate work.

Strategy A: Provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports for all students.

- **Assess instruction and support system and implement school-based improvements:** With support from the district, each school will assess how its current program meets expectations for providing high-quality core instruction and tiered supports. Each school's operational plan will include focused action steps to improve the systems and practices that support learning for all students, including providing focused professional development. See also Priority Area 4 and Priority Area 5.
- **Strengthen delivery of strong core instruction (Tier 1), and supplemental (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) interventions:** The district will establish strong school-based systems for delivering high-quality core instruction. Core instruction will be designed to engage

¹⁰ Gateway Cities in Massachusetts include: Attleboro, Barnstable, Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Peabody, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Springfield, Taunton, Westfield, and Worcester.

and meet the needs of the varied learners in every classroom and will ensure opportunities for students to learn complex concepts and demonstrate learning in a variety of ways. To ensure that the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities are being met in core instruction (Tier 1), research and evidence-based practices will be embedded into daily classroom instruction, including SEI strategies and strong inclusionary practices. Using information from the schools' assessments, the district will develop strategies for strengthening access to and use of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions that are comprehensive, responsive, flexibly-delivered, and implemented with fidelity.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations IV (all recommendations), V (5b, 5c), X (4c).

Strategy B: Collect, analyze, and share data to tailor educational and support strategies to improve student learning.

- **Implement effective data use practices:** Holyoke educators and other staff will have access to a wide variety of formative, benchmark and summative data that will allow them to identify and address specific student needs. Content coaches will assist school leadership to ensure that district expectations for effective data use for instruction, collaboration, and monitoring interventions are implemented consistently across schools. All schools will use or create common planning time to support instructional planning and the identification and monitoring of both academic and non-academic interventions. See also Priority Area 4.
- **Upgrade the district's assessment system:** The district will review and upgrade its assessment system to ensure that assessments are culturally appropriate and high-quality.
- **Implement supports and interventions:** Based on the analysis of data, schools' instructional and support teams will develop appropriate responses to ensure student learning, such as regrouping students according to their needs or identifying specific Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. School staffing will be examined to determine if alternate strategies are needed to strengthen the quality of core instruction in all classrooms. See also Priority Area 3.
- **Building-Based Support Teams (BBSTs):** The district will evaluate and adapt Holyoke's approach to BBSTs to ensure they systematically identify students' academic, social, and emotional needs and identify appropriate strategies to meet those needs. See also Priority Area 3.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation V (5b).

Strategy C: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of English language learners throughout the district.

- **Strengthen the program for ELLs in all grades:** The district will ensure that its English Language Education/English Language Development (ELE/ELD) program fosters rapid English language acquisition and academic growth for ELLs. Each school will have clear pathways for ELLs to gain higher levels of English proficiency throughout their academic experiences.
- **Revise curricula:** The district will revise the current curricula to ensure they are aligned with World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. See also Priority Area 2.
- **Analyze student data and tailor supports accordingly:** The district will support teachers in the analysis of *Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS)* data and other relevant data, the development of formative assessments, and the application of findings to instruction through specific WIDA training.
- **Implement Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) strategies:** The district will address ELLs' needs by implementing SEI strategies effectively. The district will ensure that all core academic teachers and the administrators who supervise or evaluate them earn the SEI Endorsement and will provide pathways for non-core educators to complete professional development designed to help them meet the needs of ELLs. The district will ensure that its existing cadre of coaches receives appropriate training so they can support SEI, ESL, and general education teachers.
- **Provide high-quality English as a Second Language (ESL) services:** The district will ensure that ESL teachers are adequately prepared to deliver instruction aligned with WIDA Essential Actions in both English language development classes and during other time dedicated to English language development.
- **Assess effectiveness of Metcalf's dual-language program:** The district will assess the effectiveness of the dual-language program at Metcalf to determine whether it is an exemplary model of dual-language education. During school year 2015–2016, the district will make a determination about the future parameters of the program.
- **Investigate alternative ELL program options:** Because of the high percentage of ELLs (28.5 percent) and students whose first language is not English (47.7 percent), the district will investigate alternative ELL program models that can build bilingualism and biliteracy for its students. The district will explore possible models in school year 2015–2016 to determine which it may implement beginning in school year 2016–2017. Potential models may include a newcomers program, which would be designed to strengthen the foundational skills of students new to the country and to Holyoke; and a maintenance bilingual program, an additive educational model in which students would

develop high levels of language proficiency and literacy in English and Spanish while developing their understanding of diverse cultures.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations VII (1, 2a, 2d, 3, 4) and VIII (1).

Strategy D: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities throughout the district.

- **Review the Special Education Program:** The district will review its Special Education Program and services in their entirety and provide comprehensive recommendations to improve services and programming. The district will use this review to improve its Special Education Program beginning in spring 2016.
- **Provide comprehensive services matched with students' needs:** The district will ensure that all special education placement options, including out-of-district placements, will have clear and culturally competent entry and exit criteria, progress measurement tracking and analysis procedures, guidelines for opportunities for increased student access to inclusive settings, and appropriate physical spaces.
- **Increase student opportunities to learn in inclusive settings:** Students will have increased opportunities to receive quality instructional time in inclusive settings.
- **Increase time spent in direct service of students:** The district will manage scheduling of educators and service providers to increase their time spent in direct instruction and support for students. This will also reduce the reliance on outside providers for speech and language and occupational therapy services. The district will begin this process in school year 2015–2016 by reviewing and optimizing current schedules for service providers as part of the Special Education Program review.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations II (1a) and VI (1, 2, 3a, 3b).

Priority Area 1 implementation benchmarks

Strategy A: Provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports for all students.

- By November 2015, each school will develop a process by which it monitors student progress toward end-of-year outcomes.
- By December 2015, using a framework provided by the district, each school will have begun to develop a school operational plan outlining essential actions it will take during school year 2015–2016 to increase its capacity to provide high-quality core instruction and tiered supports.

Strategy B: Collect, analyze, and share data to tailor educational and support strategies to improve student learning.

- By November 2015, schools will report to the Receiver their current schedules for using or creating common planning time for grade/subject teachers (or creating alternate opportunities for frequent collaboration) in school year 2015–2016.
- By May 2016, the district will complete an inventory of its assessments and will determine which ones will continue to be used and which other assessments need to be developed or procured.

Strategy C: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of English language learners throughout the district.

- By the end of October 2015, the district will have a plan to ensure that core academic teachers and the administrators who supervise or evaluate them will earn the SEI endorsement by June 30, 2016. By June 30, 2016, the district will develop a plan for non-core academic teachers to successfully complete an SEI course.
- By March 1, 2016, the district will have completed a review of current services for ELLs and develop a plan to maximize availability of quality services for gaining higher levels of English language proficiency throughout students' academic program.
- By April 2016, the district will have completed its review of alternative ELL program options, and will have identified a strategy and timeline for implementing any new program models beginning in school year 2016–2017.

Strategy D: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities throughout the district.

- By January 2016, the district will review its Special Education Program, identifying best practices, inconsistencies, and gaps in services for students with disabilities in the district.

- By April 2016, the district will have analyzed the findings and recommendations in the review and will have developed a plan for implementing the essential elements in subsequent school years.

Priority Area 2: Establish Focused Practices for Improving Instruction.

Challenges

Holyoke Public Schools' programs and services are not meeting the needs of all students as evidenced by the district's low student achievement, with the majority of schools in the bottom tenth percentile across the state. According to 2015 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) data, in ELA only 34 percent of Holyoke students scored *Proficient* or *Advanced* and 31 percent scored *Warning* or *Failing*. In mathematics, only 27 percent of students scored *Proficient* or *Advanced* and 42 percent were at the *Warning* or *Failing* levels. In science, while 23 percent of students scored *Proficient* or *Advanced*, 39 percent scored *Warning* or *Failing*. Core instructional programs are not consistently rigorous, research-based, and aligned to state standards with a coherent progression from one grade to the next. As indicated in the 2015 Holyoke District Review Report, the district's K–12 curriculum is not complete and the current curriculum does not fully meet the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities.¹¹

During the 2014–2015 school year, Holyoke's pre-kindergarten program had 221 students enrolled. However, 445 students were enrolled in kindergarten, indicating that there may be additional students who could benefit from pre-kindergarten in the district. Student learning gaps measured by the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) and described in the Holyoke District Review Report include, "68 percent of kindergarteners were unable to accurately identify a minimum of 13 letters and their sounds," and "58 percent did not exhibit a minimum of five early literacy behaviors that indicate reading readiness." Additionally, in 2015, only 20 percent of grade 3 students were reading on grade level, as measured by the MCAS ELA assessment of students performing at the *Proficient* or *Advanced* levels.

Holyoke students' options at the secondary level do not provide sufficient preparation for college or careers upon graduation. In fact, many students never complete their K–12 educational experience, as evidenced by 2014 data showing a four-year cohort graduation rate for Holyoke High School (HHS) students of 68.4 percent and an annual drop-out rate of 5 percent. At Dean, the results were even lower with a four-year graduation rate of only 41.5 percent and a drop-out rate of 10.2 percent.

Across the district, instructional materials and technologies are not being fully used to enhance students' educational experiences. As noted in classroom observation data in the Holyoke District Review Report, there was "limited use of technology in the classrooms and limited

¹¹ See the [Holyoke Public Schools District Review Report](#), p. 27. Click F-J next to District Review Reports) and scroll to the Holyoke 2015 District Review Report.

availability of resources to meet students' diverse learning needs." As a result, all students are not being prepared for success in careers, college, and a digital society.

Rationale

Students in the Holyoke Public Schools must be provided with a rigorous and engaging pre-kindergarten through grade 12 educational experience in order to close current academic achievement gaps. It is critical to begin this experience at an early age, as research shows the positive impacts of high-quality pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. According to the Center for Public Education, "Early childhood programs can alleviate learning gaps if children receive strong instructional and emotional support from teachers."¹² Additionally, as students progress through the secondary grades, they require educational experiences that are responsive to the unique needs of adolescents and build a solid foundation of knowledge and skills that will prepare them for college and careers. Educational models tailored to students' needs and high-quality educational tools and materials will support this effort. To ensure that every student is successful, Holyoke educators will recognize the unique needs and strengths of every student and respond with appropriate instruction, support, guidance, resources, and tools to promote success.

Strategy A: Design a districtwide early education and elementary program that builds a solid foundation for students' pre-kindergarten to grade 12 educational experiences.

- **Expand pre-kindergarten access:** The district will have pre-kindergarten available for every four-year-old child in Holyoke by the end of the turnaround plan period. Additionally, the district will use the Holyoke Early Learning Initiative (HELI) partnerships and resources to support the expansion of pre-kindergarten and build on the successful family engagement strategies that community-based programs have implemented.
- **Align pre-kindergarten and kindergarten:** All pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs will provide consistent, developmentally appropriate expectations, environments, curriculum, and instructional practice. Students will engage in dynamic learning opportunities that will foster growth both academically and socially.
- **Redesign kindergarten:** The district will redesign the kindergarten program so students are engaged in rich and developmentally appropriate learning that successfully prepares them for elementary grade level expectations. The curriculum will reflect integration of literacy and language throughout the content areas with an emphasis on developing inquiry skills. Professional development will be provided for kindergarten teachers and staff to support the new curriculum and instructional strategies.

¹² See [Pre-kindergarten: What the Research Shows](#). The Center for Public Education.

- **Create a foundational skills block in kindergarten through grade 3:** Holyoke's academic program will provide all students in kindergarten through grade 3 with targeted time to strengthen their foundational skills in core academic areas and academic language development. Through the process of developing its operational plan, each school will propose how it will customize the block to meet students' individual learning needs, strengthening their literacy skills and reaching the goal of reading on grade level by grade 3. See also Priority Area 5.
- **Accelerate progress for students in grades 3–5:** The district will work with its schools to develop and implement interventions for students in grades 3–5 who have not reached proficiency in one or more subjects. As part of its efforts to identify and support students who are not on track for on-time graduation, the district will use multiple sources of data to help schools identify these students and tailor interventions to meet their needs.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations III (3), VIII (2), and VIII (6).

Strategy B: Design a secondary educational experience that prepares all students for success in college and careers.

- **Strengthen middle grades programming:** To ensure that students enter high school with the skills necessary for success, the district will create a rigorous academic experience for students in the middle grades (6–8). The district will consider several interventions to better support these students, including: providing course offerings (such as algebra I, coding, and robotics); adding an advisory period; implementing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs); adding enrichment activities tailored to students in the middle grades; and strengthening partnerships between the K–8 schools and the high schools. One area of focus will be to build targeted programming between grades 8 and 9 to enable a smooth transition to high school.
- **Add middle grade options:** The district will create at least one additional middle school option that is specially designed to strengthen the middle school experience. Configurations for consideration will include a grades 6-12 school and a magnet middle school. The creation of these additional middle grade options may require redrawing school assignment boundaries.
- **Convene Secondary Education Redesign Working Group:** The district will convene a working group to provide the Receiver with recommendations about a redesigned high school experience in Holyoke that will be operating beginning in fall 2016. The group will provide recommendations that will lead to high-quality educational programming with a focus on college and careers for all students and a continuity of services from

grades 6–12, with a specific focus on the transition from grade 8 to grade 9. The group may also provide recommendations about topics such as: the creation of a 9th grade academy; summer programming for at-risk students; models for guidance counselor and graduation coach support; implementation of ILPs; career exploration activities for grade 9 students; and high school orientation for all grade 9 students.

- **Redesign high school:** The district will redesign the high school experience for all students by creating an innovative system with multiple academic and technical pathways to college and careers. The district will take full advantage of the assets of both HHS and Dean, as well as the resources of local institutions of higher education and the regional workforce development network, to create this integrated and comprehensive approach to college and career readiness.
- **Ensure high-quality career/vocational/technical education (CVTE) options:** The district is committed to ensuring that Holyoke’s students have access to high-quality in-district career/vocational/technical education. The district will review the CVTE programs currently available to students, improve the quality of all programs that are retained, and consider additional programs—including regional and partnership options—aligned with labor-market demand and student interest.
- **Develop Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all high school students:** By the end of the 2015–2016 school year, all rising grade 9 students will enter high school with ILPs; this practice will be expanded to students in additional grades during the 2016–2017 school year.
- **Coordinate professional development within and across high schools:** Beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, the district will provide professional development that includes teachers from both district high schools, using the Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) as a starting point for this collaboration.
- **Convene Dean’s advisory committees:** In school year 2015–2016, Dean will convene its General Advisory Committee and all Program Advisory Committees to advise and assist in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of each technical program.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations IX (the whole group of recommendations).

Strategy C: Create strong college and career pathways to close skills gaps and opportunity gaps.

- **Create rigorous pathways in grades 9–12:** As a key element of the high school redesign described above, the district will create a system of rigorous academic and technical pathways in grades 9–12 that prepare all students for college and careers.

- **Align middle grades:** The district will align its kindergarten through grade 8 curriculum with the pathways for grades 9–12 so that students enter high school with the academic preparation, career awareness, and social/emotional skills necessary for success.
- **Conduct a labor-market analysis:** In conjunction with workforce development partners, the district will conduct a labor-market analysis to determine what knowledge and skills Holyoke’s students will need to be competitive in the local labor market.
- **Support informed pathway selection:** The district will support students and families in making informed decisions about pathway selection. The district will review its current secondary counseling structures and consider holding additional outreach events, such as parent nights, visits for grade 8 students to high school campuses, and shadowing days so that students and families can select the best high school pathway for each student.
- **Expand early college programming:** The district will collaborate with local higher education institutions to develop expanded early college opportunities aligned to the district’s pathways, and to expand existing early college programming in Holyoke.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations III (7) and IX (3).

Strategy D: Build structures designed to support students who are not on track for on-time graduation and reengage those who have left the system.

- **Create vacation academies:** Beginning in school year 2015–2016, the district will develop and implement targeted academies during school vacation periods to provide intensive support to struggling students. The district will select educators from both within and outside Holyoke with track records of accelerating student growth to teach in its academies. See also Priority Area 4 and Appendix A.
- **Restructure credit-recovery programs:** The district will examine its current credit-recovery programs to ensure that they are structured in a way that meets students’ needs and encourages their participation. The district will also further develop these programs to include a blend of computer-based and classroom-based instruction.
- **Develop programs for over-aged, under-credited students:** The district will provide pathways for successfully educating students who are over-aged and under-credited for their grade levels.
- **Reengage students who have left the district and those at risk of leaving:** The district will make a concerted effort to reengage disconnected or at-risk youth, to bring them back into the system, and provide them with academic and other necessary supports. As part of this effort, the district will pursue options that include staff dedicated to

reengagement and development of a reengagement center. This effort will also include students at risk of dropping out, such as those with high rates of absence.

- **Identify and support students who are not on track for on-time graduation:** The district will analyze student data frequently for early warning signs of students who may not be on track for on-time graduation in order to provide those students with appropriate supports. See also Priority Area 1.
- **Expand summer programs:** The district will build on its existing summer programs to develop a comprehensive, districtwide summer program targeted to students who need accelerated improvement to prepare for the start of the school year.
- **Align school day and out-of-school programs:** The district will use the infrastructure of the Holyoke Early Learning Initiative workgroups to align the academic work happening during the school day with students' out-of-school activities.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations II (2a, 5a, 7) and IV (1).

Strategy E: Ensure that Holyoke's educational tools and materials are high-quality and will prepare students with 21st century knowledge and skills.

- **Develop an engaging, standards-based, aligned curriculum:** The district will engage in a multi-year, multi-phase process to evaluate and strengthen as needed the current curriculum in ELA/literacy, mathematics, science and technology/engineering, history and social science, foreign language, the arts, physical education, and health/wellness.
- **Support instructional planning:** The district will support schools in the development of collaborative teacher teams and site-based scheduling that promote frequent professional collaboration to improve instructional practices. See also Priority Area 4.
- **Use aligned, culturally relevant instructional materials and tools:** Teachers will use culturally relevant materials, resources, and texts aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks so that all students are able to engage in meaningful learning experiences that build on their strengths, background, and perspectives. Instructional materials and resources will include those that provide tailored supports to ELLs and students with disabilities to address their unique learning needs and close achievement gaps.
- **Provide curriculum and tools to improve students' writing skills:** The district will work with schools to provide teachers with the tools they need to improve students' writing skills. During school year 2015–2016, the district will explore curriculum and scheduling options to ensure that each school has structures in place to develop students as

proficient writers who meet or exceed expectations for opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing as outlined in the Massachusetts curriculum standards.

- **Increase access to instructional technology:** The district will provide all students with access to technology tools. Technology will be used to differentiate instruction and provide targeted supports for students with disabilities, ELLs, and other students. See also Priority Area 5.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations III (4) and VII (3).

Priority Area 2 implementation benchmarks

Strategy A: Design a districtwide early education and elementary program that builds a solid foundation for students' pre-kindergarten to grade 12 educational experiences.

- By December 31, 2015, the district will complete a review of its current kindergarten curriculum, instructional practices, and master scheduling practices, along with an initial exploration of best kindergarten practices in high-performing schools and districts in Massachusetts. By March 31, 2016, the district will determine its direction for the development of kindergarten programming and ensure that this work is appropriately integrated into the school year 2016–2017 budget.
- By June 2016, the district will have reviewed current pre-kindergarten models and developed a plan to expand access to a high-quality pre-kindergarten experience to every four-year-old child in Holyoke by the end of the turnaround plan.

Strategy B: Design a secondary educational experience that prepares all students for success in college and careers.

- By January 31, 2016, the district will convene both the General Advisory Committee and each Program Advisory Committee at Dean to advise and assist in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of each technical program. By March 31, 2016, the district will submit its Annual Perkins Report about the district's progress on all 8 core indicators.
- By March 1, 2016, the district will create a plan for the implementation of recommendations made by the Secondary Education Redesign Working Group; implementation will begin in school year 2016–2017.
- By June 1, 2016, 100 percent of rising grade 9 students will be ready to enter high school with ILPs.

Strategy C: Create strong college and career pathways to close skills gaps and opportunity gaps.

- By December 31, 2015, the district will hold initial meetings with local higher education institutions about the establishment of early college programming.
- By March 1, 2016, the district will develop a plan for potential pathways and options to be launched in school year 2016–2017, including the creation new academic and/or technical pathways for implementation in grades 9–12.

Strategy D: Build structures designed to support students who are not on track for on-time graduation and reengage those who have left the system.

- By April 2016, the district will develop a measure to determine whether students are on track for on-time graduation.
- By April 30, 2016, the district will have implemented at least one vacation academy during a school vacation period that provided intensive, customized academic support to struggling students.

Strategy E: Ensure that Holyoke's educational tools and materials are high-quality and will prepare students with 21st century knowledge and skills.

- By March 1, 2016, the district will conduct an audit of existing technological and other educational tools and materials at both school and district levels, to determine where additional investments may be needed to fill gaps; the audit will include a focused look at tools and materials targeted for ELLs and students with disabilities. This audit will inform the district's technology plan for school year 2016–2017 and beyond.
- During school year 2015–2016, the district will explore curriculum and scheduling options to ensure that by June 30, 2016, the district has structures in place to develop students as proficient writers who meet or exceed expectations for opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing as outlined in the Massachusetts curriculum standards.

Priority Area 3: Create a Climate and Culture that Support Students and Engage Families.

Challenges

HPS data demonstrate that there are significant improvements needed in Holyoke related to a distinct absence of a culturally affirming climate of high expectations for all students. According to the Holyoke District Review Report,¹³ in observed classes high expectations for all students were not seen consistently across the district. For instance, observers saw clear and consistent evidence that students were engaged in challenging academic tasks in only 50 percent of the elementary, in 55 percent of the middle, and in 31 percent of the high school classes. Across the district, in only 34 percent of observed classes were teachers seen clearly and consistently providing multiple opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking skills. In addition, the district review team did not see positive learning environments consistently across the grade levels.

Multiple years of behavior data also indicate the need for improvements in the district's culture. For instance, the 2013–2014 student out-of-school suspension rate, at 20.0 percent per year, was more than 5 times higher than the state average of 3.9 percent; this continued an out-of-school suspension rate trend dating back to 2003 where at least 1 in 5 students received an out-of-school suspension each year. In addition, almost 29 percent of students were chronically absent (defined as absent 10 percent or more of the days enrolled) during school years 2013–2014 and 2014–2015. The district does not have a coordinated system to assess and identify students' social/emotional challenges and needs and to provide comprehensive supports to address those needs.

Qualitative data synthesized from a series of parent focus groups in spring/summer 2015 suggest there is a deep level of family mistrust of Holyoke schools and the desire for much more effective communication between schools and families. Finally, because of deferred maintenance and other facility issues, the district's school buildings vary widely in terms of providing safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments for Holyoke's students.

Rationale

Research conducted nationally and among Level 4 and Wraparound Zone schools in Massachusetts demonstrates that a key factor in effective turnaround is a school climate in which students feel safe and supported, while they are being challenged and engaged. One critical dimension to this work is recognizing the direct connection between social/emotional

¹³ See the [Holyoke Public Schools District Review Report](#), p. 30. Click F-J (next to District Review Reports) and scroll to the Holyoke District Review Report 2015.

development, academic learning, and success in life.¹⁴ Schools must take ownership for the social/emotional competence of their students and implement strategies to teach and model those skills, just as they would for traditional academic content areas. In addition, strategies must be actively pursued to promote positive relationships among students, educators, staff, and families. In order to support this new culture of high expectations for both academic and social/emotional growth, HPS will restructure staff positions and create systems to identify students' assets and needs, connect them to appropriate in- and out-of-school supports, and actively monitor those supports. In addition, it is critical that HPS staff engage with the diverse student body and their families in a way that is culturally competent and positions families as active partners in students' educational experiences.

These areas of work are vital in any school context, but particularly with respect to addressing the achievement gap and the out-of-school factors that exacerbate it. There is growing evidence that attention paid to school climate, social/emotional aspects of learning, and effective family engagement can mitigate the impact of socio-economic context on academic success¹⁵ and improve achievement and motivation to learn; attendance; parent engagement; and health and behavioral outcomes.

Strategy A: Transform the district's culture into one of high standards and positive regard for all students and staff.

- **Set high standards for students and staff:** Holyoke Public Schools will establish a culture of high standards for all students and staff at every school and districtwide. Beginning in school year 2015–2016, the district will use key back-to-school events to start setting this new culture of high expectations, including but not limited to: the August leadership retreat, professional development days before the school year begins, and convocation.
- **Promote attendance and engagement:** Students and staff will come to school and work each day ready to engage. The district's high expectations include expectations around attendance. The district will redefine its approach and strategies about attendance to include consistent neighborhood-based outreach and targeted efforts to reengage students who have become separated from school. The focus of the district's outreach and reengagement work will shift from the schools to the community, and the role of the school-based outreach workers will be clarified to reflect this shift. Outreach workers will no longer provide primary clerical support to the front office at schools.

¹⁴ Domitrovich, C., Dusenbury, L. & Hyson, M. (2013): *Beyond Academic Competence – The Foundations of School Success*. <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2013/1303EduPolicyForumNonCognitive.pdf>

¹⁵ Astor, R.A., Benbenisty, R., & Estrada, J.N. (2009). School violence and theoretically atypical schools: The principal's centrality in orchestrating safe schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 46(2), 423–461. <http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/documents/policy/sc-brief-v3.pdf>

- **Use data to monitor climate and student support needs:** Educators and other staff will use formative and summative data to assess school climate, student supports, and other factors affecting the conditions for learning in the schools and make improvements as needed. See also Priority Area 1.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations IV (4c) and V (1).

Strategy B: Build all students' social/emotional skills in order to promote school engagement, academic success, and college and career readiness.

- **Develop and implement strategies in support of social/emotional learning (SEL):** The district will develop and implement strategies needed to promote students' social/emotional learning, using tools such as professional development around the impact of trauma on learning. These tools and strategies will exist within a tiered system of supports for students' learning. See also Priority Area 1.
- **Restructure district staffing in support of SEL:** The Receiver will assign clear roles and responsibilities for social/emotional learning throughout the district, both at central office and at the school level; some assignments may result in new positions. Although development of students' social/emotional skills is the responsibility of all staff, individuals assigned these roles and responsibilities will oversee the implementation of SEL efforts and ensure that staff are receiving support and feedback.
- **Enhance the district's positive behavior management and disciplinary approach:** The district will review and revamp its current approach to disciplining students, including its protocols, structures, and facilities (e.g., student support rooms, PBIS). The district will clarify positive behavioral expectations and will assess existing alternatives to suspension to determine whether they should be revised, expanded, or discontinued, and provide training to support staff in these changes. The district will continue to implement Restorative Circles at Holyoke High School while also exploring the use of other restorative justice practices across the district.

Strategy C: Ensure that all HPS buildings provide environments that will foster rapid improvement of academic achievement.

- **Develop safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments:** The district will ensure the creation of safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments in all its schools and in district buildings. HPS will establish a districtwide crisis team and ensure that each school convenes a school-based crisis team. The district team will review and monitor schools' crisis plans and will work with public safety and law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

- **Create spaces that promote family and community partnership:** In addition to the students and staff who use the schools and district buildings every day, families and other community stakeholders will be welcomed and encouraged to access and participate in school and district activities. In school year 2015–2016, the district will undertake strategies and improvements to provide welcoming and culturally affirming spaces, such as training front office staff in customer service strategies; providing interpretation services to facilitate conversation; and identifying space for families and other stakeholders to meet on site.
- **Provide well-maintained facilities that support turnaround strategies:** The district will review and revise protocols and staffing as needed to ensure that all the district's buildings are safe places for learning and working. As part of its commitment to provide well-maintained facilities, the district will create a long-term capital improvement and facility plan. The district will work with organizations such as the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to plan for longer-range maintenance and other facilities issues, including but not limited to potentially building a new school centrally located in the city.
- **Expand nutrition programs that support student learning:** The district will continue and expand its food programs that benefit students throughout the year, including breakfast in the classroom, the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, after-school and summer programs, nutrition support for homeless families, and the weekend (food) backpack program. The district will expand its breakfast in the classroom program in a phased process that will result in all students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8 receiving breakfast in the classroom in school year 2016-2017. The district will also explore offering breakfast in the classroom for Holyoke's high school students. District staff will work to ensure that healthy and culturally relevant foods are a key component of the district's food programs.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations II (1a, 1b, 6d) and V (5b).

Strategy D: Develop structures and supports to identify and address students' strengths and needs.

- **Assess and support student needs:** The district will reformulate Building-Based Support Teams (BBSTs), both the creation and supervision of these teams at the central office and implementation at the schools, to ensure that students' academic, mental health, enrichment, and other needs are being accurately assessed and properly supported. See also Priority Area 1.

- **Pilot redesigned Full Service Community School model:** In school year 2015–2016, the district will pilot a redesigned Full Service Community School model at 4 of its schools. The purpose of this redesigned model will be to strengthen school climate and culture, student support, SEL, and family and community engagement. This pilot will promote reenvisioned roles for all staff in the participating buildings, including new leadership responsibilities for some staff. Some structures that will be redesigned include systems for universal assessment, collection and use of data to inform progress and determine program effectiveness, and more strategic coordination of services, programs, and partnerships.
- **Provide central office supports for culture and climate:** The district will review its protocols and oversight around school and district culture and climate, and refine existing structures, staffing, and programs as needed to build strong and supportive cultures in each of the district’s schools.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations II (1b, 2a, 6b).

Strategy E: Organize partner supports at schools and the central office to maximize partners’ efforts and align them to the district’s turnaround strategies.

- **Provide central office support for partnership development:** The Receiver will designate clear ownership at the central office for organization and oversight of the district’s work with partners that align with and support the turnaround plan strategies. The district will conduct a school- and district-level analysis of what the most pertinent needs are, identify partners to address those needs, and support the management of those partnerships to ensure effectiveness.
- **Collaborate with partners:** The district will develop and sustain a coalition of HPS’ partners in order to ensure maximum communication, collaboration and effectiveness across partners’ efforts. To do this, HPS will build on the existing structures that have been established through the Holyoke Early Learning Initiative and may leverage that infrastructure to support other school improvement priorities.
- **Work with state agencies to provide additional supports:** In addition to its work with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the district will collaborate with other state agencies to reinvigorate existing partnerships and develop new ones that can support Holyoke students’ learning. See also Statutory Components of the Turnaround Plan.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations II (5a) and III (3).

Strategy F: Build relationships with families, repair trust in the school district, and encourage and support families to be active partners in students' learning.

- **Set family engagement expectations for all HPS staff:** In order to promote the rapid improvement of academic achievement for its students, the district must effectively engage with Holyoke's families. The Receiver will work with staff to develop a clear mission and purpose statement about family engagement that conveys the district's responsibility for building relationships with families and repairing trust in the school district. HPS staff will go into the community to interact with families outside of district buildings.
- **Prioritize and support family engagement:** HPS will designate clear central office leadership for the organization of student and family engagement efforts and will monitor the effectiveness of those efforts across the district and at each school. In addition, the district will provide guidance to more clearly define and leverage the roles of staff who interact with families frequently (e.g., counselors, family liaisons, outreach workers) and will provide training and support to strengthen the effectiveness of those interactions.
- **Provide opportunities to expand staff cultural competence:** The district will provide opportunities for HPS staff to learn information and skills that may improve their interactions with the district's students and families, such as tours of local Holyoke neighborhoods as part of new staff induction; learning opportunities about poverty or Puerto Rican culture; and conversational Spanish courses offered in conjunction with local institutions of higher education.
- **Develop a Family Resource Center:** The district will develop a Family Resource Center to serve as a hub for information and services for families, both within and outside of the district. The student enrollment process will be facilitated through the Family Resource Center and as part of this integration, the district will review and revise the current student assignment process as necessary.
- **Create school-based structures for family input:** The district will ensure that each school has all organizations required by statute (e.g., School Site Council, ELL Parent Advisory Committee) and will also consider other venues and structures in which families can have a voice in the operations and strategic vision of the schools.
- **Conduct home visits:** Beginning in summer 2015, the district has piloted a home visit program in order to talk with families about school year 2015-2016, discuss their aspirations and concerns for their children, and provide families with an opportunity to get to know school staff. This strategy is also a cultural competence-building activity for school staff. HPS will broaden this practice and expectation across the district.

- **Use multiple strategies to engage with families:** The district will employ multiple strategies to communicate with families to share information and seek their input and participation. The district will build on a variety of techniques piloted in spring and summer 2015, including neighborhood-based conversations and information sessions, social media, and other communication methods. The district will also make HPS communications available in multiple languages to facilitate communication for all families. Family volunteer opportunities will be offered, and the district will ensure that schools create or continue events that support family members' partnership in student learning.
- **Celebrate students' heritage:** The district will support schools to host events and promote practices that celebrate students' cultural heritage. These strategies will be tailored to each school community and families will be key participants in their planning.
- **Develop a Parent University:** The district will develop a Parent University for Holyoke families to provide learning opportunities such as how to access district resources, language skills programs (e.g., ESL), and adult education courses (building on the work of the Holyoke Adult Learning Center). The Parent University will better coordinate and build on existing district offerings for families in English as a Second Language and GED courses.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations I (1), II (1a, 2b, 3b, 5b, 6c), and III (1).

Priority Area 3 implementation benchmarks

Strategy A: Transform the district's culture into one of high standards and positive regard for all students and staff.

- By November 2015, the district will have identified student, staff, and parent surveys to measure the instructional and social/emotional climate in each school. The district will also articulate a process for collecting, analyzing and using those data to inform school and districtwide improvement efforts.
- By January 2016, the district will review its current protocols, data collection, and staffing related to student attendance in order to enhance its approach.

Strategy B: Build all students' social/emotional skills in order to promote school engagement, academic success, and college and career readiness.

- By June 2016, the district will identify tools and establish processes to monitor the effectiveness of its strategies in support of students' Social Emotional Learning (SEL).
- By February 2016, the district will review and assess the effectiveness of its current approach to disciplining students, including protocols, structures, and facilities currently used in those processes (e.g., positive behavioral expectations, student support rooms, PBIS, alternatives to suspension); this review will serve as the basis for future decisions about the district's approach.

Strategy C: Ensure that all HPS buildings provide environments that will foster rapid improvement of academic achievement.

- Based on climate data collected during school year 2015–2016 (see Strategy A), each school will incorporate strategies to create a safer, healthier, and more welcoming learning environment into the development of its school year 2016–2017 school operational plan.

Strategy D: Develop structures and supports to identify and address students' strengths and needs.

- By April 2016, the district will review and analyze all its behavioral and support programs to determine whether students' needs are being met at all grade levels and will make decisions about consolidation, reconfiguration, discontinuation, and/or creation of programs as necessary.
- By April 2016, the Receiver will have reviewed the progress and results of the Full Service Community School pilot and will decide which aspects to replicate in additional schools.

Strategy E: Organize partner supports at schools and the central office to maximize partners' efforts and align them to the district's turnaround strategies.

- By February 2016, the district will conduct a school- and district-level analysis of district needs and existing partner-provided resources to determine where there are gaps and redundancies.
- By July 2016, a coalition structure will be established to enable collaboration between HPS, community partners, and other state and local agencies in support of turnaround priorities.

Strategy F: Build relationships with families, repair trust in the school district, and encourage and support families to be active partners in students' learning.

- By January 2016, the district will designate clear central office leadership for the organization of student and family engagement efforts in order to support and monitor those efforts across the district and at each school.
- By May 2016, the district will develop a prospectus for creating a Family Resource Center and will identify the necessary funding, space, and human capital to support it.

Priority Area 4: Develop Leadership, Shared Responsibility and Professional Collaboration.

Challenges

Holyoke has not developed the leadership, shared responsibility among its staff, and encouraged professional collaboration sufficiently to support strong academic outcomes for students. For example, in the 2014 TELL Mass survey, 56 percent of Holyoke’s teachers who responded disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.”¹⁶ On the same survey, when asked how much time they devoted in an average week to common planning time, 44 percent of Holyoke’s teachers who responded indicated that in an average week they devoted an hour or less per week, and another 26 percent of teachers reported that in an average week they devoted no time to common planning time.¹⁷ Forty-four percent of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that an appropriate amount of time was provided for professional development.¹⁸

Structures for teacher leadership have been inconsistent across the district, with an absence of meaningful leadership roles; the few opportunities had limited participation in school year 2014–2015 because of scheduling before and after school, instead of during the school day. In addition, schools are in different stages of developing leadership teams and the teams are not high functioning. The district has not effectively used data to recognize excellence in teaching and has not provided model classrooms where teachers can learn from the effective practice of their peers. Staff voice and input have also been limited, with the central office doing most of the planning and making most of the decisions.

Implementation of an educator evaluation system to promote the growth and development of all educators, to place student learning at the center, to recognize excellence in teaching and leading, to set a high bar for professional teaching status, and to shorten timelines for improvement¹⁹ has been a challenge for Holyoke. Effective implementation of the educator evaluation system has been constrained by several factors, including the length of educator improvement plans, the number of forms required for evaluation, and the limits on who could serve as an evaluator. Holyoke was required to evaluate all educators in 2013–2014 but did not submit evaluations for almost 20 percent of those educators. In addition, the evaluation system did not include evaluation protocols and tools for all groups of staff (e.g., paraprofessionals and nurses). Holyoke also has specific challenges in identifying measures of educator impact and

¹⁶ See [TELL Mass 2014 survey of Holyoke teachers](#). The Holyoke Public Schools response rate on this survey was 62.61 percent.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See [603 CMR 35.00](#).

implementing the Student Impact Ratings in accordance with the timeline outlined in the Massachusetts regulations on Evaluation of Educators.²⁰

Rationale

Strong teaching and leadership are critical to the success of all components of this turnaround plan. Working together, Holyoke educators will provide high-quality instruction and be responsible for improving student learning, growth, and achievement. Holyoke's human capital systems must be able to identify, effectively evaluate, develop, support, and retain educators and other staff who possess the commitment and demonstrated ability to work effectively with Holyoke's students; informal and formal leadership roles will enable the district to leverage staff expertise. In order to attract and retain the highest quality staff, it will be essential to revamp the compensation system to ensure that individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth are key factors. Further, Holyoke will need educators who are willing and interested in collaborating with each other and with administrators to bring about positive change in instruction and results for students. The strategies outlined in this plan require all HPS employees to work together to define and execute the district's turnaround efforts.

Strategy A: Ensure Holyoke's educators and other staff have the knowledge and skills needed to drive student learning, growth and achievement.

- **Create district structures to support professional learning for all staff:** The district will create an Office of Professional Learning to provide timely, collaborative learning experiences that strengthen teaching practice and build leadership capacity. Holyoke will provide indicators of high-quality, district-based professional development (PD) and will review district and school sponsored PD regularly.
- **Provide high-quality professional learning for a thriving workforce:** The district will ensure that staff members have access to a range of professional learning opportunities including: teacher-led school-based sessions aligned to school goals; peer observations of model classrooms where teachers can learn from the effective practice of their peers; job-embedded PD; and district-supported offerings. Through the process of developing school operational plans, the Receiver will review schools' proposals for PD. See also Priority Area 1 and Priority Area 5.
- **Add time for professional learning:** Teachers will be afforded regular preparatory time during the work week. Such preparatory time may include common planning and professional development. Through the process of developing school operational plans, each school will propose to the Receiver a school schedule that incorporates additional

²⁰ See [603 CMR 35.00](#)

time for professional learning for all staff, including professional development. The district will ensure that beginning in school year 2016–2017, at least 10 professional development days are scheduled for each school. Professional development may be offered in full days or shorter time increments. See also Priority Area 5 and Appendix A.

- **Use data to drive PD:** Holyoke will create a districtwide task force composed of staff from various roles to analyze student learning and achievement data and assess current PD offerings. After analyzing available data, this task force will make recommendations to the Receiver for professional learning opportunities with the goal of improving professional practice and student outcomes.
- **“Holyoke University”:** During school year 2015–2016 the district will begin to create a “Holyoke University” to provide a menu of high-quality PD offerings for staff to select. A school may also include “Holyoke University” offerings as a component of the school operational plan that it proposes to the Receiver. Effective educators, as approved by the Receiver, will take on leadership roles as presenters of PD. See also Priority Area 5.
- **Cohort-based induction model:** Holyoke will build on its existing induction program of professional support for new teachers and administrators in accordance with the Induction and Mentoring Regulations²¹ and based on the ESE Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programs.²² The program will provide targeted PD to meet the needs of beginning and incoming educators, and will be aligned to district priorities for student growth, learning, and achievement. Holyoke will also provide a mentoring program for teachers in their first three years of teaching.
- **Coaching for continuous improvement:** The district will ensure that all staff benefit from coaching to improve their performance. The district will work with administrators to create a culture where coaching is understood as a normal and essential component of continuous improvement, with clearly stated expectations as to scheduling and related logistical matters to support coaching. See also Priority Area 1.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations III (8) and IV (all recommendations).

Strategy B: Create opportunities to use the expertise of staff throughout the system to take on both informal and formal leadership roles in support of the turnaround.

- **Create clearly defined educator leadership roles:** The district will create school-based and districtwide leadership opportunities, such as a teacher cabinet.
- **Develop pathways to leadership and additional responsibility:** Holyoke will develop formal paths to school and central office administrator leadership positions for those

²¹ See [603 CMR 7.00](#).

²² See [Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programs](#).

educators who are interested in administrative leadership roles. Building on the expertise of the educators in the district, Holyoke will create new leadership roles at the school level based on individual school needs and will encourage staff to engage in this work and to recommend districtwide roles to the Receiver.

- **Ensure that schools have effective staff:** To ensure that schools have the most effective staff working in the most productive manner, principals will make staffing decisions based on the best interests of the students in their schools, including having the authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates without regard to seniority. The Receiver will make school leadership changes as appropriate in order to bring focus and urgency to school redesign. See also Appendix A.
- **Connect the work of teams to student outcomes:** The district will redefine the role and function of the school Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs).

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation X (7).

Strategy C: Develop and/or enhance systems and structures at the district and school levels to encourage and facilitate professional collaboration across and within schools.

- **Create a culture of collaboration:** Holyoke will create a culture of collaboration where all staff members will be learners. Team structures will bring educators together in grade level, content area, and/or vertical teams to examine data from common assessments and refine instruction to improve student growth.
- **Collaborate around effective practices:** Educators who have demonstrated effective practice that results in student growth and achievement will be asked to model their effective practices by making their classrooms available for peer observations and sharing samples of student work.
- **Plan and conduct PD collaboratively:** Educators will have additional opportunities for common planning time and professional learning time. In school year 2015–2016, as part of the process of developing the school operational plan, each school’s ILT will work with the district’s teaching and learning team to propose to the Receiver a common planning time schedule for school year 2016–2017. See also Priority Area 5 and Appendix A.
- **Fulfill professional obligations:** Teachers and other professional staff will be expected to devote the necessary time and effort to achieve and maintain high-quality education, including fulfilling their professional obligations around common planning and professional learning time, as defined by the principal and approved by the Receiver. See also Appendix A.
- **Collaborate with industry:** At Dean in school year 2015–2016, the district will establish both schoolwide and program-specific advisory councils designed to foster professional

collaboration between Dean staff and industry professionals in support of the school's programs. See also Priority Area 2.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation X (5c).

Strategy D: Evaluate district employees through a streamlined, fair, and transparent process that provides staff with feedback for improvement and opportunities for professional growth in both knowledge and skills.

- **Support the growth and development of all educators:** Educators shall be evaluated according to the ESE model system for Educator Evaluation as adapted by the Receiver.²³ All other staff will be regularly evaluated based on evaluation tools developed or adapted by the Receiver. The district will create a supervision and evaluation committee to advise the Receiver on effective implementation of the system. See also Priority Area 5 and Appendix A.
- **Shorten timelines for improvement:** The HPS educator evaluation system and the HPS evaluation processes for other staff will include a "Receiver's Review." The Receiver's Review will be a fair and expedited process to ensure that educators and other staff of concern are identified and held accountable. During school year 2015–2016, the Receiver will conduct a prompt review of educators on Directed Growth Plans, and educators and other staff on Improvement Plans, and those employees otherwise identified as having poor performance. Educators and other staff whose performance is determined to be unsatisfactory after receiving feedback and an opportunity to improve will be dismissed. Educators and other staff whose performance is determined to need improvement will be placed on an appropriate plan. See also Appendix A.
- **Dispute resolution:** HPS will use a dispute resolution process that values employees' input, allows for the fair, rapid, and effective resolution of employee concerns, and ensures that the Receiver retains his authority over all components of the turnaround plan. See also Appendix A.
- **Focus on student growth and achievement:** The district will develop and disseminate best practices for supervision, feedback, and coaching that contribute to classroom and student outcomes. Holyoke will investigate evaluation technology and data management platforms that will assist the district in implementing evaluation protocols and facilitating information-sharing between evaluators and staff.
- **Recognize excellence in teaching and leading:** Evaluation data will help inform the PD provided to both new and experienced educators while also recognizing effective educators and rewarding them with leadership opportunities. See also Appendix A.

²³ See [603 CMR 35.00](#).

- **Revamp compensation approach:** The district will revamp its approach to compensation to ensure that individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth are key factors in a professional compensation system and that employees have opportunities for additional responsibility and leadership. See Appendix A.
- **Develop actionable feedback to strengthen evaluators' practice:** The district will analyze summative evaluation data to identify areas for additional professional learning for administrators in school year 2015–2016, including calibrating appraisal of effective instruction, conducting observations and providing feedback, and using measures of student learning, growth, and achievement.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation X (2a).

Priority Area 4 implementation benchmarks

Strategy A: Ensure Holyoke's educators and other staff have the knowledge and skills needed to drive student learning, growth, and achievement.

- By December 1, 2015, the district will develop a structure, clear responsibilities, and charge for an Office of Professional Learning.
- The professional learning task force will convene by December 1, 2015, to begin the work of developing PD offerings for school year 2016–2017.
- By January 31, 2016, the district will review its current induction and mentoring activities for new teachers and administrators to determine effectiveness of support; by June 30, 2016, the district will improve its induction and mentoring activities in preparation for school year 2016–2017.

Strategy B: Create opportunities to use the expertise of staff throughout the system to take on both informal and formal leadership roles in support of the turnaround.

- By March 15, 2016, the professional learning task force will administer a survey to all staff to assess the quality of professional learning opportunities and to determine staff's interests and needs for school year 2016–2017.
- By June 15, 2016, the district will assess the effectiveness of its use of the Teacher Advisory Council to determine any modifications that may be needed to improve effectiveness for school year 2016–2017.

Strategy C: Develop and/or enhance systems and structures at the district and school levels to encourage and facilitate professional collaboration across and within schools.

- By November 1, 2015, the district will hold the first convening of school ILTs to begin to evaluate their processes and structures and to share best practices.
- By May 1, 2016, through the process of developing operational plans, each school will create a schedule for school year 2016–2017 that ensures opportunities for educators and other staff to collaborate and to learn from each other.

Strategy D: Evaluate district employees through a streamlined, fair, and transparent process that provides staff with feedback for improvement and opportunities for professional growth in both knowledge and skills.

- By October 15, 2015, the district will begin to implement the Massachusetts Model Educator Evaluation System, as adapted by the Receiver, consistent with Massachusetts regulations on Evaluation of Educators.²⁴

²⁴ See [603 CMR 35.00](#)

- The district will begin collecting year one educator impact data from District Determined Measures for some educators by June 1, 2016.

Priority Area 5: Organize the District for Successful Turnaround.

Challenges

Systemic challenges in the organization of the district have prevented Holyoke schools from delivering high-quality education for all students. A primary challenge relates to the district's approach of strong centralization for decision-making over key factors related to its schools. Principals and school-based teams have little autonomy to make important decisions to meet the needs of the individual students in their schools. Instead, most decisions about how to implement the academic program---such as decisions about professional development---are made centrally and schools are then required to follow those mandates.

This approach has led to low staff buy-in for crafting the direction for their schools. For example, in the 2014 TELL Mass survey teachers were asked about the role they had in determining the content of in-service PD programs at their schools; 82 percent of those who responded indicated that they had either a small role (38 percent) or no role at all (44 percent).²⁵ Fifty-nine percent of teachers who responded disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "Teachers have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery (i.e., pacing, materials, and pedagogy)."²⁶

Another key challenge is that the district currently has many systems that are confusing or outdated; in some cases, the district does not have necessary systems in place. For example, the district does not have technology platforms for managing data and communicating across departments and schools. The district has been unable to use data to plan effectively because current systems do not allow data to be compiled and reported easily. Critical district systems are not integrated, adding to the difficulty in planning holistically across the district. For example, the absence of coordination among human resources, curriculum, and budget functions limits the ability of the district to work strategically in support of student learning.

Rationale

In order to maximize the rapid improvement of academic achievement of Holyoke's students, the Receiver will organize the district and its systems for successful turnaround. Research on school and district turnaround efforts indicates that school-based autonomy can be critical for success, because educators and families are best positioned to understand and meet students' needs. Successful school and district turnaround efforts also have an explicit focus on building the capacity of educators and school community members so that they are able to leverage the

²⁵ See [TELL Mass 2014 survey of Holyoke teachers](#). The Holyoke Public Schools response rate on this survey was 62.61 percent.

²⁶ Ibid.

autonomy to lead to improved student outcomes. The Receiver will grant schools autonomy, and the central office will support schools in developing their capacity to use the autonomies to improve student achievement. Clear accountability frameworks will help the district ensure that schools' strategies lead to improvements.

In order to reach greater levels of achievement, Holyoke's students need more instructional time that is used effectively to deliver high-quality instruction and enrichment opportunities. The district needs excellent teaching and leadership in every school, and high-performing staff throughout the district. The Receiver and principals require the authority to make staffing decisions based on the best interests of students. The Receiver must have the ability to resolve employee disputes fairly and quickly while maintaining his authority over all components of the turnaround plan. The Receiver must have the flexibility to reorganize the district staff, and choose and retain principals and other administrative staff who are effective leaders, have the appropriate skills, and bring focus and urgency in implementing the terms of the turnaround plan.

As a high-need and low-income community, Holyoke must ensure that its use of all its resources results in increased student learning. Holyoke's current per-student expenditures exceed those of a number of comparable districts. The district will curtail expenditures that do not directly support the priorities identified in the turnaround plan, and reallocate funds and staff positions for more productive uses.

Strategy A: Recruit, retain, and deploy employees strategically to lead and implement the district's turnaround strategies.

- **Motivate high-performing staff to remain in Holyoke:** The district will establish incentives for the retention of high-performing staff, such as the development of leadership structures and new opportunities for top performers. See also Priority Area 4.
- **Recruit talent to Holyoke:** The district will use innovative strategies, including but not limited to the use of proven recruitment partners and organizations, to aggressively recruit and hire talented individuals to work in the Holyoke Public Schools. The district will establish strong relationships with colleges and universities, national partners, established teacher-development programs, and other recruitment networks.
- **Transform human resources:** The district will transform its human resources function into a modern service-oriented system, providing a resource for prospective and current employees and helping the district fulfill its mission.

- **Build a diverse Holyoke workforce:** HPS will expand its recruitment to further diversify its workforce, including outreach to groups and organizations that can assist with this goal.
- **Develop internal talent:** The district will develop internal talent for teaching and leadership roles. For instance, the district will consult with local colleges and universities to develop an urban teachers' academy within Holyoke and to pilot a program to develop a paraprofessional-to-teacher pipeline.
- **Professional compensation system:** During school year 2015–2016, the Receiver will develop a new professional compensation system including a career path that will compensate employees based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth. See Appendix A.
- **Evaluate staff:** All staff will be regularly evaluated based on evaluation processes developed or adapted by the Receiver. See also Priority Area 4 and Appendix A.
- **Select and retain the most effective staff:** In order to ensure that the most effective staff are selected and retained, the Receiver and principals will have authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates, without regard to seniority. The Receiver will establish selection criteria for layoffs which will include the following, as appropriate: qualifications; licensure; work history; multiple measures of student learning; operational need; and the best interests of students. The Receiver will have the right to reassign educators and other staff. See also Appendix A.

This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendations X (1, 2a 3a, 3b, 5a).

Strategy B: Empower schools to tailor turnaround strategies to their school communities and to develop and share innovations across the district.

- **Grant school-level autonomies:** Schools in HPS will have the autonomy to tailor programs to best respond to students' needs. The Receiver will identify the specific autonomies that may be granted to schools based on an assessment of their performance and readiness to use the autonomies effectively. See also Strategy F.
- **Develop school operational plans:** In school year 2015–2016, each school will develop a school operational plan for school year 2016–2017. In addition to the school's instructional models and tiered supports, each plan will also include information about how the school will use any autonomies granted by the Receiver and how the school will use extended learning time, such as PD and common planning time. The principal will recommend the plan to the Receiver after consultation with the faculty and staff of the school. The Receiver may require reasonable exceptions to these provisions and may

require changes in any plan to best serve the interests of students. The Receiver will review and modify or approve all school plans. See also Strategy C.

- **Share best practices among schools:** The Receiver will share best practices among schools in the district.
- **Develop an accountability framework:** In school year 2015–2016, the district will develop an accountability framework that clearly identifies what is expected of schools, how progress will be defined and measured, and how schools can maintain or expand the autonomies available to them. The district will conduct periodic monitoring of each school’s progress in meeting its desired outcomes and effectively implementing the strategies identified in its operational plan. This monitoring enables the district to identify schools that may need additional support.

Strategy C: Maximize the use of time to improve student achievement.

- **Use school operational plans to optimize the use of time:** For school year 2015–2016, current daily school schedules will be continued except as approved or required by the Receiver. The Receiver may approve any school’s strong plan for expanding learning time for school year 2015–2016, including plans for extended time for Level 4 or Level 5 schools. Through the process of developing school operational plans for school year 2016–2017, each principal will engage in a planning process involving the faculty and staff, parents, students, and members of the community to develop a school operational plan that will include a proposed draft school schedule for school year 2016–2017 and a menu of strategies to more effectively use instructional time to improve student achievement. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, changes in the school day, school year, and/or school calendar. For example, the expanded minimum hours may be accomplished by implementing staggered teacher schedules and/or using support from outside partners to provide programs and services to students. See also Strategy B and Appendix A.
- **Add time for instruction and enrichment:** Beginning with school year 2016–2017, each elementary and middle school’s program shall be a minimum of 1330 hours per school year. The increased minimum hours will include time for students to be engaged in both high-quality instruction and enrichment activities. High school minimum hours will be established as part of the secondary redesign being conducted in school year 2015–2016. See also Priority Area 2.
- **Establish the district calendar and consider alternate school calendars:** The Receiver will establish the school calendar each year. However, through the process of developing school operational plans, the Receiver may approve an alternate school calendar at the request of a principal if the Receiver and the principal determine that the alternate calendar is in the best interests of students. For example, some principals

may find that moving to a modified, year-round calendar may best support students in their schools as a proactive strategy to prevent summer learning loss. See also Strategy B and Appendix A.

- **Use out-of-school time for additional instruction and enrichment:** The district and its schools may develop creative strategies to provide students with opportunities for additional instruction and enrichment outside of the regular school day. As described in Priority Area 2, vacation academies will be used to provide struggling students with focused, data-driven instruction during vacation periods. The district may also choose to use time after school, on holidays, on Saturdays, and/or during the summer to provide additional learning opportunities for students. See Appendix A.
- **Support schools to use time effectively:** The district will provide training and support to schools in developing effective strategies to maximize use of time. The district may engage partners with expertise in the use of expanded time to support principals and their schools teams in the design and execution of their school-based plans. All school plans for time use will be reviewed and modified or approved by the Receiver through the process of developing school operational plans. See also Strategy B.

Strategy D: Design a central office that is structured to provide maximum support and assistance to Holyoke's schools.

- **Redefine and redesign the central office:** As school-based teams begin to develop the needed capacity to fully use autonomies to meet the needs of their students and improve student achievement, the Receiver will redefine the role and purpose of the central office. Beginning in fall 2015, the district will review the current structure and functioning of the central office to ensure that it supports schools effectively. Existing positions and programs may be consolidated as needed to ensure strong school support. See also Strategies B and C and Priority Areas 3 and 4.
- **Deploy central office staff to support school capacity to use autonomies:** The central office will support schools in developing their capacity to use autonomies to improve student achievement. Central office supports will be adjusted over time based on schools' increasing capacity. See also Strategy B.
- **Reallocate cost savings for school support:** Through the review of central office, the district will also identify potential cost savings that can be reallocated in direct support of school-level work.

Strategy E: Organize district systems and structures to create efficiencies and streamline support to schools.

- **Refine student enrollment and assignment processes:** The district will review and refine as necessary current enrollment and school assignment patterns to ensure

equitable educational experiences for all students across grade levels in all neighborhoods and wards. As part of this review, the district will examine current enrollment boundaries and assignment patterns.

- **Examine grade configurations and school distribution:** The district will examine its current grade configurations, such as the K-8 school model, to determine whether current district structures are well-suited to educating students at all grade levels. See also Priority Area 2.
- **Analyze and revamp data management systems:** The district will conduct an analysis of current ways in which data are collected, reported, and used throughout the district. As a result of this analysis, the district may identify the need to revamp existing data systems or implement a new data management system that will connect and integrate the district's existing data systems. See also Priority Area 1.
- **Audit technology infrastructure:** The district will conduct an audit to determine what new technology may be needed to gain efficiencies in existing district systems, such as human resources, payroll, and office systems. The audit will include an examination of how existing systems can be integrated to improve productivity and data-sharing across the district.
- **Create a districtwide technology strategy:** The district will create a districtwide technology strategy that supports the learning and teaching goals of the district. The Receiver will convene stakeholders to provide input and recommendations for the technology strategy. See also Priority Area 2.

Strategy F: Invest the district's resources in strategies that will lead to improved student achievement.

- **Assess and reallocate district resources:** HPS will evaluate the distribution of the district's funds and reallocate all available financial resources (district, state, federal and other) as necessary to support turnaround priorities and schools.
- **Grant school autonomy over use of funds:** The Receiver may grant schools flexibility around the overall use of funds designated for their schools. The flexibility may include decisions about programming and compensation models. See also Strategy B.
- **Support schools to use resources effectively:** The district will support schools to use resources effectively.
- **Assess management systems:** The district will review and streamline operational systems to reduce costs and improve services districtwide.

Strategy G: Use the Receiver's authorities to lay the foundation for successful turnaround.

- **Use proven partners:** To accelerate improvement, the district will contract and collaborate with proven partners---including charter schools, turnaround operators, and

education management organizations---to support district and school improvement efforts.

- **Change policies and union contracts, including collective bargaining agreements:** Certain immediate changes to the district's policies, union contracts (including collective bargaining agreements), and working conditions are necessary to achieve the goals of the turnaround plan. The Receiver must also have the ability to address issues as they arise, including making additional changes to collective bargaining agreements to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic performance of Holyoke students. Appendix A contains changes that will take effect as of the date of the release of the turnaround plan and must be incorporated into future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver and/or the Commissioner, at their discretion, will initiate discussions and processes as appropriate pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K.
- **Change employment contracts:** Certain changes to employment contracts between the district and individual employees are necessary to achieve the goals of the turnaround plan. The Receiver must have the flexibility to choose and retain principals and other administrative staff who are effective leaders, have the appropriate skills, and bring focus and urgency in implementing the terms of the turnaround plan. As a result, the end date for all employment contracts for all current principals shall be changed to June 30, 2016. Likewise, the end date for all employment contracts with all other administrators and other staff shall be changed to June 30, 2016. The changed end date supersedes any contrary provisions in any individual employment contract between the district and an individual employee. The Receiver may, at his discretion, extend any employment contract or exercise the termination provisions of any contract.
- **Provide flexibility for procurement policies and processes:** To the extent permissible, the district will provide schools with the ability to conduct their own procurements, while ensuring the proper district-level financial controls and oversight.
- **Change vendor contracts:** To ensure that its resources support the priorities identified in the turnaround plan, HPS will review its vendor contracts and will limit, suspend, or change those contracts where appropriate.
- **Dispute resolution:** HPS will use a dispute resolution process that values employees' input, allows for the fair, rapid, and effective resolution of employee concerns, and ensures that the Receiver retains his authority over all components of the turnaround plan. See also Appendix A.

Strategy H: Build the capacity of the school committee to sustain change at the conclusion of receivership.

- **Build school committee capacity:** The Receiver will provide regular updates to the school committee about the implementation of the turnaround plan. A PD plan will be

developed in coordination with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees that will focus on preparing the committee to resume its duties when the district has demonstrated sufficient gains and made the changes necessary to meet its goal of exiting receivership.

- **Reallocate resources:** The Receiver will reallocate the committee's staff as necessary to support school initiatives.

Priority Area 5 implementation benchmarks

Strategy A: Recruit, retain, and deploy employees strategically to lead and implement the district's turnaround strategies.

- By December 1, 2015, the district will develop a strategy to identify and contract with proven partners to support struggling schools.
- By June 30, 2016, the district will develop a professional compensation system.

Strategy B: Empower schools to tailor turnaround strategies to their school communities and to develop and share innovations across the district.

- By November 15, 2015, the district will identify the specific autonomies that may be granted by the Receiver to schools through the process of developing school operational plans.
- By November 15, 2015, the district will develop an accountability framework to evaluate the readiness of schools to use different Receiver-granted autonomies.

Strategy C: Maximize the use of time to improve student achievement.

- By December 15, 2015, the district will develop the process, templates, and tools that school-based teams will use to develop school operational plans.
- As part of the process of developing school operational plans, by April 1, 2016, each Holyoke school will develop a draft school schedule for school year 2016–2017; the Receiver will review and amend or approve these schedules.
- By April 30, 2016, at least one vacation academy will be planned and successfully implemented during a school vacation period.

Strategy D: Design a central office that is structured to provide maximum support and assistance to Holyoke's schools.

- By February 1, 2016, the district will undergo a review of central office structure and functions, with a goal of developing recommendations about how to structure the central office to best support schools to improve student achievement.

Strategy E: Organize district systems and structures to create efficiencies and streamline support to schools.

- By May 1, 2016, HPS will create a Technology Plan for the district to be implemented beginning in school year 2016–2017.

Strategy F: Invest the district's resources in strategies that will lead to improved student achievement.

- By February 1, 2016, the district will conduct a financial audit and analysis of the central office's structure to identify resources that can be redeployed to schools.

Strategy G: Use the Receiver's authorities to lay the foundation for successful turnaround.

- By April 1, 2016, the district will review existing municipal procurement protocols and determine any circumstances in which schools may conduct their own procurements. If there are any circumstances in which schools may conduct their own procurements, the district will provide pertinent guidance and technical assistance to schools by May 1, 2016.

Strategy H: Build the capacity of the school committee to sustain change at the conclusion of receivership.

- By June 30, 2016, the district will work with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees to create a PD plan for the school committee for the upcoming school years.

Statutory Components of the Turnaround Plan

This section serves to highlight how the turnaround plan addresses the specific student subgroups and programmatic areas identified in G.L. c. 69, § 1K(c).

The secretaries of health and human services, public safety, labor, and workforce development and other applicable state and local social service, health and child welfare officials will coordinate with the Secretary of Education and the Commissioner about the implementation of strategies related to items 1–3 below, subject to appropriation.

(1) Steps to address social service and health needs of students and their families in order to help students arrive and remain at school ready to learn

The district has multiple partnerships with area health service organizations, universities, and local and state agencies such as the Department of Public Health to provide direct health services, prevention programs, and health information to students and their families. The district will review its existing partnerships in order to coordinate health services, prevention, and screening activities taking place throughout the district, at all grade levels.

The district currently works with outside providers to offer school-based psychotherapy in its schools, matched with individual students' needs. The district will ensure that students receive necessary mental health screenings and services and family counseling as appropriate. The district will improve its coordination of outside health and mental health service providers with district service providers to maximize student and family access. Providing health and mental health services on-site is designed to reduce dismissals for outside appointments and increase student attendance, and to provide increased access to necessary services.

The district will also refine its processes for referring students and families to social service providers as necessary. For instance, the district will build on relationships with outside agencies, including state agencies such as the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the partnerships developed through HELI, to assess and revise its current protocols for referring students and families to community social service resources.

See also Priority Area 3.

(2) Steps to improve or expand child welfare services and, as appropriate, law enforcement services in the community, to promote a safe and secure learning environment

The district's focus on building a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations will be central to its ability to foster safe and secure learning environments districtwide. Further developing the district's partnerships with child welfare and law enforcement organizations---

and incorporating these partners throughout its work---will help to reinforce the culture the district is working to create. The district recognizes that these partners must be involved in the work at the early, culture-setting stages in order to identify law enforcement and safety concerns.

The district has piloted the use of a restorative justice protocol at Holyoke High School. The district is committed to analyzing the successes and challenges of the pilot to date to determine whether this protocol has reduced problematic student behaviors. If the program is shown to be effective, the district will determine how it may expand the pilot to additional schools, at different grade levels. Some counselors from Holyoke's K-8 schools have already participated in an initial restorative justice training.

Educators and other staff will use data to assess school climate, student supports, and other factors affecting the conditions for learning in the schools. Having readily accessible data that can be aggregated and analyzed easily will enable the district to identify trends and address any child welfare and safety issues in the early stages.

In addition, the district will partner with local law enforcement agencies as appropriate to ensure that all HPS schools are safe places for students to learn and educators to work. In school year 2015-2016, working with the Holyoke Police Department, the district will ensure that there are trained officers in place at both high schools, during school hours and at school-based events. The district will also build on its existing partnerships with the DCF, the Department of Probation, and the Juvenile Court.

The district's commitment to developing a Family Resource Center will also ensure that families have access to information about these resources.

See also Priority Area 3.

(3) Steps to improve workforce development services provided to students in the district and their families in order to provide students and families with meaningful employment skills and opportunities

Since the district was placed into chronically underperforming (Level 5) status, many stakeholders have come forward to support the work of the receivership and to discuss the impact of the district's turnaround efforts on Holyoke's workforce and industry. Municipal officials, community organizations, local businesses, regional organizations, and state agencies all recognize the need for Holyoke's students and families to be prepared to participate fully in Holyoke's economy as it grows.

A key component of the district's turnaround will be redesigning its approach to secondary education, focusing on developing multiple academic and technical pathways to college and careers. HPS will take full advantage of the assets of both HHS and Dean, as well as the resources of local institutions of higher education and the regional workforce development system, to create an integrated and comprehensive approach to college and career readiness. In fall 2015, the district will convene a Secondary Education Redesign Working Group to make recommendations for redesign options for implementation in school year 2016–2017.

Importantly, the district will begin providing students exposure to college and career information and activities in middle school. Using the recommendations of the Secondary Education Redesign Working Group, HPS will better support its students in the middle grades; the group may provide recommendations about topics such as: the creation of a grade 9 academy, summer programming for at-risk students, models for counselor and graduation coach support, implementation of ILPs, career exploration activities for grade 9 students, and high school orientation for all grade 9 students.

In school year 2015–2016, the district will reinvigorate the advisory committees at Dean, which bring outside professional expertise to interact with both staff and students at the school. The schoolwide advisory committee will be reconstituted, and program-specific advisory committees will be created. Input and guidance received from industry experts will be used to ensure that Dean's programs are effectively preparing students for careers after graduation. The district is committed to providing additional opportunities for Holyoke High School students to learn more about a variety of career paths and opportunities. The district also will provide additional college information and exposure to students at both of Holyoke's high schools. This may include field trips to area colleges and universities, information fairs on-site in the district, and seminars about application and financial aid processes.

See also Priority Area 2.

The district also plans to create a Parent University, offering courses and seminars that will help Holyoke's families develop their workforce skills. Offerings may include skill-building topics such as English as a Second Language, or job search opportunities such as building interview skills. The district will review its existing partnerships with local workforce development organizations to determine where referrals and event opportunities can be expanded (e.g., career fairs, job posting access). The district's planned Family Resource Center will be an importance resource for connecting families with workforce development opportunities and referrals as well.

See also Priority Area 3.

(4) Steps to address achievement gaps for limited English-proficient, special education and low-income students

The district will continue to build on its work with local and state partner agencies to ensure students' needs are being met so they are able to focus on school. For instance, the district will build on its existing partnerships with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and the Department of Housing and Community Development to provide housing information to families at Holyoke's full service community schools. The district will continue to grow its food service programs that assist students in need, such as its breakfast in the classroom and summer meals programs and its weekend backpack program for food distribution.

See also Priority Area 3.

While the district strives for high-quality instruction in every classroom, for every student, it is particularly important that English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities have teachers who are skilled in meeting their diverse needs. The district will provide professional learning opportunities to strengthen educators' ability to provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports, and will work with ESE to ensure that core content educators are trained and receive their endorsements in Sheltered English Instruction (SEI).

The district will strengthen the academic program for ELLs in all grades, ensuring that its program fosters rapid English language acquisition and academic growth. Pathways to support building higher levels of English proficiency in each school will minimize the possibility of long-term ELLs remaining in the program more than six years throughout the students' time in school. The district will also review its curricula, assessments, and instructional strategies to ensure they are fully effective for ELLs. The district is committed to ensuring all its educators are prepared to teach ELLs, including through SEI endorsement course offerings, and will monitor instruction to ensure that these strategies are being implemented correctly.

In order to identify best practices, inconsistencies, and gaps related to the provision of special education services to students with IEPs, the district will conduct a review of the policies, procedures, and practices currently in place for its special education program; this review will result in recommendations for action steps to address any gaps or challenge areas. Students will have increased opportunities to receive quality instructional time in inclusive settings. The district will also increase educators' and direct service providers' time spent in direct service of students.

See also Priority Area 1.

(5) Alternative English language learning programs for English language learners

The district already has a dual-language program at Metcalf School; in school year 2015–2016, that pilot will continue, expanding the dual-language offering to include kindergarten and grade 1. The district will assess the effectiveness of the dual-language program at Metcalf to determine whether it is an exemplary model of dual-language education. During school year 2015–2016, the district will make a determination about the future parameters of the program.

During school year 2015–2016, the district will investigate alternate ELL program models that can build bilingualism and bi-literacy for its students. The district will explore possible models in school year 2015–2016 to determine which of these models it may implement beginning in school year 2016–2017. Potential models may include a newcomers program and a maintenance bilingual program. During school year 2015–2016, the district will assess its internal data about its newcomer students to determine whether different and/or augmented services are needed and develop a plan to further support these students in school year 2016–2017 and beyond.

See also Priority Area 1.

(6) A budget for the district including any additional funds to be provided by the Commonwealth, federal government, or other sources

The Fiscal Year 2016 budget was adopted by the Holyoke City Council in June 2015.

See also Appendix C.

Appendix A: Required Contract and Policy Changes

SECTION 1: REQUIRED TERMS FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, §1K, the Commissioner and the Receiver must create a turnaround plan intended to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in the district. The Commissioner and the Receiver will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the turnaround plan. Among other things, the Commissioner and the Receiver may expand, alter or replace the curriculum and program offerings of the district, or a school in the district; reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the district; provide funds to increase the salary of an administrator or teacher working in an underperforming or chronically underperforming school in order to attract or retain highly qualified administrators or teachers, or to reward administrators or teachers who work in chronically underperforming districts that have achieved the annual goals in the turnaround plan; expand the school day or school year or both of schools in the district; limit, suspend or change one or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement in the district; add pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten, if the district does not already have the classes; limit, suspend, or change one or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices related to the underperforming schools in the district; provide job-embedded professional development for teachers in the district; provide for increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction; establish a plan for professional development for administrators in the district; and establish steps to assure a continuum of high-expertise teachers by aligning the following processes with the common core of professional knowledge and skill: hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture, and organizational structure.

Currently, the district's eight (8) collective bargaining agreements have expired. The terms outlined below are necessary to the successful implementation of the turnaround plan and reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, working rules, and any practices or policies pursuant to the expired collective bargaining agreements. These terms will take effect as of the date of the release of the turnaround plan and must be included in any future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver will provide a summary of these changes to each union leader by approximately October 30, 2015. The Receiver reserves the right to make additional changes to collective bargaining agreements as needed. Nothing contained in the turnaround plan or the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as they are provided for under G.L. c. 69, §1K.

These terms shall supersede any contrary provisions of the district's collective bargaining agreements or any pre-existing district or school committee practices or policies, except that the provisions in the Morgan Turnaround Plan (including its Appendix A) will remain in effect. The terms reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, work rules and any practices or policies, and are implemented pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K. Provisions of collective bargaining agreements that are inconsistent with or do not otherwise support the goals of the turnaround plan are suspended.

I. Receiver

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K, the Receiver for the Holyoke Public Schools is vested with all the powers of the superintendent and the school committee. Wherever a reference in a collective bargaining agreement is made to the "school committee" or the "superintendent," it will be interpreted to mean the "Receiver."

II. Management Rights

Nothing contained in the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as provided in G.L. c. 69, § 1K.

III. School-Based Decision-Making

The Receiver will determine what autonomies he will provide to individual district schools. Through a school-based decision-making process, schools will create annual school operational plans addressing those autonomies that have been granted to the school, subject to the Receiver's approval.

IV. Professional Compensation System

During the 2015-2016 school year, the Receiver will develop a new professional compensation system, which will be implemented after consultation with the union, and which will contain a career path which will compensate employees based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth, and which may allow for school-based variations.

Teachers, from within and outside of the Holyoke Public Schools, may also be eligible to serve in the vacation academies. Teachers serving in the vacation academies will be paid a stipend which will be subject to taxes and/or withholdings, will not be added to the base salary, and will not be counted toward salary for retirement calculation purposes.

The Receiver may review and adjust the salary of an individual employee in order to attract or retain a highly-qualified employee, or when he otherwise determines that such an adjustment is in the best interest of the district.

V. Teaching & Learning Time

Professional Obligations

Teachers and other professional staff shall devote whatever time is required to achieve and maintain high-quality education in the Holyoke Public Schools. For example, unless formally excused, teachers and other professional staff shall participate in all regular school functions during or outside of the normal school day, including faculty meetings, parent conferences, department meetings, curriculum meetings, graduations, and other similar activities. Teachers will also be afforded regular preparatory time during their work week. Such preparatory time may include common planning periods and professional development.

School Schedules

For the 2015–2016 school year, current daily school schedules will be continued except as approved or required by the Receiver. The Receiver may approve any school's strong plan for expanding learning time for the school year 2015–2016, including plans for extended time for Level 4 or Level 5 schools.

Beginning with the 2016–2017 school year, each elementary and middle school's program of instruction for students shall be a minimum of 1330 hours per school year.

During the 2015–2016 school year, each principal will engage in a planning process involving the faculty and staff, parents, students and members of the community to develop a new school schedule for the 2016–2017 school year based on student needs and school and community assets. Each plan will address how learning time will support (1) high academic success, especially through personalized support and learning; (2) a well-rounded education that will provide a broad and rich school day including English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, drama, technology, sports, and social/emotional learning; and (3) expanded time for teachers to collaborate, use student data, and develop their practice. Plans should be creative with regard to the use of instructional technologies, staggered teacher schedules, vacation academies, summer learning and enrichment programs, and outside partners. Each plan must address opportunities to incorporate community partners and resources and must include an appropriate and sustainable arrangement about teacher and staff responsibilities, hours, and compensation. Each plan must include a minimum of 10 days of professional development, which may be offered in full days or shorter time increments, totaling at least 10 days.

The principal will recommend the plan to the Receiver after consultation with the faculty and staff of the school. The Receiver may require any reasonable exceptions to these provisions and

may require changes in any plan to best serve the interests of the students. Plans will be approved at the Receiver's discretion.

School Calendar

The Receiver will establish the school calendar each year. The Receiver may approve an alternate calendar at the request of a school principal, if the principal and Receiver determine that the alternate calendar is in the best interests of the students in the school.

VI. Evaluation

Educator Evaluation System

Educators and administrators shall be evaluated according to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education model system as adapted by the Receiver.

The Receiver will develop and implement evaluation processes for all other district personnel.

The HPS educator evaluation system and the HPS evaluation tools for other staff will include a "Receiver's Review." The Receiver's Review will be a fair and expedited process to ensure that teachers, administrators, and other staff of concern are identified and held accountable. During school year 2015–2016, the Receiver will conduct a prompt review of educators on Directed Growth Plans, and educators and other staff on Improvement Plans, and those employees otherwise identified as having poor performance. Teachers, administrators, and other staff whose performance is determined to be unsatisfactory after receiving feedback and an opportunity to improve will be dismissed. Teachers, administrators, and other staff whose performance is determined to need improvement, will be placed on an appropriate plan.

VII. Staffing

In filling positions, principals have the authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates without regard to seniority. The Receiver may adopt any procedure(s) that he determines appropriate in filling vacancies.

The Receiver has the right to lay off teachers and other staff because of reductions in force or reorganizations resulting from declining enrollment or other budgetary or operational reasons. The Receiver will establish the selection criteria for layoffs of teachers and other staff. Such selection criteria may include, but are not limited to qualifications, licensure, work history, multiple measures of student learning, operational need, and the best interests of the students. Where all other factors are equal, seniority may be used as the deciding factor. The Receiver

may adopt any procedure(s) that he determines appropriate in the event of a reduction in force.

The Receiver has the right to reassign educators and other staff, including those who have been displaced from their positions. After discussion with the affected educator or staff member, the educator or staff member may be assigned to any open position for which he or she is qualified. If the educator or staff member is not assigned to a mutually agreeable position, the Receiver will assign the educator or staff member to a position for which he/she is qualified. Such an assignment may include instructional support, substitute teaching, or administrative tasks. If no mutually agreeable position is available, the Receiver may lay off the educator or other staff. The Receiver may adopt any procedure(s) that he deems appropriate in the assignment/reassignment of educators or other staff.

The Receiver may formulate job descriptions, duties, and responsibilities for any and all positions in the district.

All HPS staff are expected to be involved in a variety of educational and administrative activities that are necessary to fulfill the mission of the district.

The Receiver may outsource work in whole or in part, may transfer bargaining unit work, and may hire and employ part-time employees.

The Receiver may create nontraditional administrative positions in order to operate the district efficiently. Such positions will not be covered by any district collective bargaining agreement.

The Receiver may change work schedules for all bargaining units to mirror the time that schools are in session and offices are open.

VIII. Dismissal

In schools declared underperforming or chronically underperforming, teachers with professional teacher status and all represented district staff that have completed their probationary period may be dismissed for good cause.

IX. Grievance and Arbitration

Dispute Resolution:

Any dispute over the application, meaning, or interpretation of an action taken by the Receiver/HPS in formulating, implementing, or administering any component of the turnaround

plan shall be subject to the following dispute resolution procedure, which shall be the exclusive process available for resolving the dispute.²⁷ Accordingly, the provisions of the grievance and arbitration articles of all the collective bargaining agreements are suspended and/or modified relative to such disputes.

Step 1

- The employee may bring a concern to the principal/head of department in writing within five (5) calendar days of the occurrence of the event giving rise to the concern. The employee should specifically state the desired resolution.
- The employee may be represented by a union representative at any stage of the dispute resolution process.
- Within 5 calendar days of the receipt of the concern, the principal/head of department should meet with the employee to discuss the concern.
- Within 5 calendar days of the meeting, the principal/head of department should issue a decision in writing to the employee.

Step 2

- If the employee is not satisfied with the resolution issued by the principal/head of department, s/he may bring the concern to a senior HPS executive, designated by the Receiver, in writing within 5 calendar days of receiving the principal's/head of department's decision.
- Within 5 calendar days of the receipt of the concern, the HPS executive should meet with the employee to discuss the concern.
- Within 5 calendar days of the meeting, the senior executive should issue a decision in writing to the employee.

Step 3

- If the employee is not satisfied with the resolution issued by the senior HPS executive, s/he may bring the concern to the Receiver (or his designee, if applicable) in writing within 10 calendar days of receiving the previous decision.
- Within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the concern, the Receiver or his designee should meet with the employee to discuss the concern.
- Within 10 calendar days of the meeting, the Receiver should issue a decision in writing to the employee, which shall be final and binding.

²⁷ This dispute resolution process does not apply to disputes relating to the dismissal of a teacher with professional teacher status. Those disputes will be governed by the arbitration process set out in G.L. c. 69, § 1K(d), or G.L. c. 71 § 24, as appropriate.

General Provisions

- Failure of the employee to advance the grievance to the next level within the time period shall be deemed to be acceptance of the prior grievance response.
- The Receiver may suspend the time periods in writing with the union.

During the 2015–2016 school year, the Receiver will develop a dispute resolution process that will be applicable to disputes other than disputes over the application, meaning, or interpretation of an action taken by the Receiver/HPS in formulating, implementing, or administering any component of the turnaround plan. Before the implementation of the dispute resolution process, the current grievance and arbitration system will remain in place for such other disputes.

X. Handling New Issues

Any changes which the Receiver deems necessary to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic performance of Holyoke students may be implemented after a ten-day period of consultation with the appropriate union. These changes may be implemented at the Receiver's discretion, consistent with G.L. c. 69, s. 1K.

XI. Existing District Practices

The Receiver may implement changes pursuant to the turnaround plan notwithstanding any existing district policy, "past practice," side letters, or extra-contractual agreements. To the extent that a collective bargaining agreement codifies and/or incorporates existing policies or practices, such provisions are suspended.

SECTION 2: REQUIRED CHANGES TO EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

Certain changes to employment contracts between the district and individual employees are necessary to achieve the goals of the turnaround plan. The Receiver must have the flexibility to choose and retain principals and other administrative staff who are effective leaders, have the appropriate skills, and bring focus and urgency in implementing the terms of the turnaround plan. Consequently, the end date for all employment contracts for all current principals is changed to June 30, 2016. Likewise, the end date for all employment contracts with all other administrators and any staff members with individual contracts is changed to June 30, 2016. The Receiver may, at his discretion, extend any such employment contract or exercise the termination provisions of any contract. The changed end date supersedes any contrary provisions in any individual employment contract between the district and an individual employee.

SECTION 3: REQUIRED CHANGES TO OTHER CONTRACTS

The district must ensure that its use of all its resources results in increased student learning. The district will curtail expenditures that do not directly support the priorities identified in the turnaround plan, and reallocate funds and staff positions for more productive uses. For example, to the extent permissible, the district will provide schools with the ability to conduct their own procurements, while ensuring the proper district-level financial controls and oversight. Likewise, to ensure that its resources support the priorities identified in the turnaround plan, HPS will review its vendor contracts and will limit, suspend, or change those contracts where appropriate.

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
(1) Student attendance, dismissal rates, and exclusion rates	Attendance rate (Increase)	92	92	93	94	
	Percentage of students chronically absent (10% or more) (Decrease)	29	26	24	22	
	Out-of-school suspension rate (Decrease)	13	11	10	9	
	In-school suspension rate (Decrease)	6	5	5	4	
	Percentage of students suspended more than 10 days (Decrease)	2	1	1	1	Cumulative; replaces Exclusion rate
	Dismissal rate (Decrease) *	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
(2) Student safety and discipline	Interpersonal incidents (Decrease) **	616	565	513	462	
	Weapons incidents (Decrease)	24	22	20	18	
	Incidents of substance possession/use/intent to sell (Decrease)	71	65	59	53	
	Incidents of theft/vandalism (Decrease)	99	91	83	74	
(3) Student promotion and dropout rates	Grade 9 retention rate (Decrease)	16	14	13	12	
	Dropout rate – Aggregate (Decrease)	6	6	5	5	
	Dropout rate – High Needs students (Decrease)	7	7	6	5	

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
(3b) Graduation rates	Four-year cohort graduation rate - High Needs students (Increase)	56	59	63	67	
	Four-year cohort graduation rate - Aggregate (Increase)	60	64	67	70	
	Five-year cohort graduation rate - High Needs students (Increase)	56	59	63	67	
	Five-Year cohort graduation rate - Aggregate (Increase)	58	62	65	69	
(4) Student achievement on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System; (5) Progress in areas of academic underperformance; (6) Progress among subgroups of students, including students from low-income families as defined by Chapter 70, English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities; (7) Reduction of achievement gaps among different groups of students	ELA CPI - Aggregate (Increase) ***	65	68	71	74	
	ELA CPI - High Needs students (Increase)	61	64	67	71	
	ELA CPI - English language learners (Increase)	51	55	59	63	
	ELA CPI - Students with disabilities (Increase)	48	52	56	61	
	Math CPI - Aggregate (Increase)	57	61	65	68	
	Math CPI - High Needs students (Increase)	54	57	61	65	
	Math CPI - English language learners (Increase)	45	49	54	59	
	Math CPI - Students with disabilities (Increase)	42	47	52	57	
	Science CPI - Aggregate (Increase)	58	61	65	68	
	Science CPI - High Needs students (Increase)	53	57	61	65	

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
	ELA MCAS W/F percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	27	25	23	20	
	ELA MCAS W/F percentage - High Needs students (Decrease)	31	28	26	23	
	ELA MCAS W/F percentage - English language learners (Decrease)	41	38	35	31	
	ELA MCAS W/F percentage - Students with disabilities (Decrease)	51	46	42	38	
	Math MCAS W/F percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	38	35	31	28	
	Math MCAS W/F percentage - High Needs students (Decrease)	42	39	35	32	
	Math MCAS W/F percentage - English language learners (Decrease)	53	48	44	40	
	Math MCAS W/F percentage - Students with disabilities (Decrease)	62	57	51	46	
	Science MCAS W/F percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	35	32	29	26	
	Science MCAS W/F percentage - High Needs students (Decrease)	40	37	34	30	
	ELA MCAS Advanced percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	5	5	6	7	
	ELA MCAS Advanced percentage - High Needs students (Increase)	2	2	3	3	

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
	Math MCAS Advanced percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	8	9	10	12	
	Math MCAS Advanced percentage - High Needs students (Increase)	5	5	6	7	
	Science MCAS Advanced percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	3	4	4	5	
	Science MCAS Advanced percentage - High Needs students (Increase)	1	2	2	2	
	ELA Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP) - Aggregate (Increase)	43	51	51	51	
	ELA Median SGP - High Needs students (Increase)	41	51	51	51	
	ELA Median SGP - English language learners (Increase)	43	51	51	51	
	ELA Median SGP - Students with disabilities (Increase)	33	51	51	51	
	Math Median SGP - Aggregate (Increase)	40	51	51	51	
	Math Median SGP - High Needs students (Increase)	40	51	51	51	
	Math Median SGP - English language learners (Increase)	37	51	51	51	
	Math Median SGP - Students with disabilities (Increase)	35	51	51	51	

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
	ACCESS for ELLs Median SGP on ACCESS - All ELLs (Increase)	46	51	51	51	
	ACCESS for ELLs Median SGP on ACCESS - Long Term ELLs (Increase)	34	51	51	51	
(8) Student acquisition and mastery of 21st century skills	Percentage of high school graduates completing MassCore requirements (Increase)	22	25	29	32	Baseline data to be updated in fall 2015 to include summer graduates
	Percentage of students participating in computer science programs (courses, workshops, afterschool programs, etc.) in grades 6-8****	0	13	25	38	
	Percentage of students participating in computer science programs (courses, workshops, afterschool programs, etc.) in grades 9-12****	10	21	32	43	
(9) Development of college readiness, including at the elementary and middle school levels	Percentage of high school students having at least one early college experience in high school (includes passing AP or dual-enrollment course) (Increase)	16	22	27	33	
	Percentage of students achieving college readiness benchmark score on PSAT assessment (Increase)	5	13	20	28	
	Percentage of students "on track for on-time graduation" as defined by district	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; to be updated in plan by spring 2016

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
(10) Parent and family engagement	Percentage of families, including families whose home language is not English, reporting that they have opportunities to learn how to support their child's learning at home	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of families reporting that they feel welcome when visiting their child's school	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of families reporting that they receive responses to central office and school inquiries in a timely way	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of teachers conducting at least three home visits during the course of year	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
(11) Building a culture of academic success among students	Percentage of students reporting that most students in their classes try hard to get good grades	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of students reporting that they are able to get the help they need to be successful at school	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of students reporting that their classes really make them think	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals						
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2015-2016 Target	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	Notes
(12) Building a culture of student support and success among school faculty and staff	Percentage of staff reporting that their professional development experiences add value to their work	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of staff reporting that they have a say in decision-making at their school	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Percentage of students reporting that their culture and native language are respected at school	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available
	Teacher attendance rate (days attended)	94.3	94.7	95.1	95.5	
(13) Developmentally appropriate child assessments from pre-kindergarten through grade 3	Percentage of students in kindergarten through grade 2 reaching end-of-year grade level target on ELA diagnostic assessments	42	47	52	57	
	Percentage of pre-kindergarten students identified as being "on track for literacy" based on district early literacy assessments	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	New measure; previous district data not available

* Dismissal rate = Total number of dismissals from non-routine student-nurse encounters divided by total number of non-routine encounters

** Interpersonal incidents includes count of offenses for: physical attacks, physical fights, sexual harassment, and sexual assault (including rape).

*** Note that assessment goals are subject to change based on PARCC implementation decisions and timelines.

**** For this measure, computer science programs must be at least one academic quarter in duration.

Appendix C: Budget for the District

As a high-need and low-income community, Holyoke must ensure that its use of resources such as time, funds, human capital, and operational supports results in increased student learning. The effective use of resources to maximize student achievement is the principle on which all of the district's strategies will be based. The Commissioner and the Receiver are fully committed to aligning the use of resources in support of student learning.

The Receiver recognizes the challenge of allocating resources most effectively when budget increases are limited. For the last several years, district administration has had to cut personnel and non-personnel lines to balance the budget and look to reorganization and reallocation to fund strategic initiatives. Some funding constraints for future fiscal years are already known, so fully implementing turnaround initiatives requires continuing reorganization and reallocation to prioritize resource allocations that best support student learning.

The FY16 general funds budget below is an updated version of the June 24 (2015) budget approved by the Commissioner as acting Receiver. The total remains the same, with adjustments made as the budget was set up in the district's financial system with updated salaries and costs. The Receiver may make further reallocations. The list of FY16 grants is current as of August 30, 2015, and is subject to change.

Holyoke Public Schools - FY16 Budget Summary

August 30, 2015

District Expenditures	
Schools	
Dean Tech	3,841,877
Therapeutic Intervention Program	593,563
Donahue	3,703,702
Holyoke High	7,403,874
Kelly	3,238,983
Lawrence School	2,298,657
McMahon	2,980,473
Metcalf	1,638,364
Metcalf Dual-Language Program	90,000
Morgan	2,559,863
Peck	3,286,998
Sullivan	3,359,007
White	2,740,269
Substitutes (all schools)	800,000
SUB-TOTAL - SCHOOLS	38,535,630

Holyoke Public Schools - FY16 Budget Summary

August 30, 2015

Districtwide Offices	
Superintendent/Receiver Office	1,252,346
Assistant Superintendent Office	180,408
Athletics	603,306
District Curriculum Offices	554,761
Finance	1,715,364
Human Resources	308,413
Operations - Food, Buildings and Maintenance, Security	5,003,425
Operations – Transportation*	5,800,000
Professional Development Department	<i>Funded by grants</i>
School Committee	59,400
School Health	968,642
Special Education (In-District)	5,234,215
Special Education (Out-of-District)	2,615,000
Student Services	905,619
Technology	1,394,015
SUB-TOTAL - DISTRICT-WIDE	26,594,914
DISTRICT TOTAL EXPENDITURES	65,130,544
* The FY16 transportation budget is still under review.	
City Expenditures for Education	
Administration	69,400
Operations & Maintenance	75,000
City Retirement & Unemployment Compensation	2,648,641
Insurances – Retirees & Active Employee Health & Life; FICA	8,753,210
Insurances - Property	120,000
School Choice Tuition Expense	1,952,896
Charter School Tuition Expense	11,285,629
TOTAL CITY EXPENDITURES	24,904,776
District and City Expenditures for Education	90,035,320

Holyoke Public Schools - FY16 Budget Summary	
FY16 Grants	
Entitlements and Grants Approved as of Sept. 4, 2015*	
Federal Grants	
Title I	5,847,659
Title I Carryover	300,000
Title II-A	676,661
Title III	243,886
Title III Carryover	190,117
Title III Summer Grant	11,235
IDEA: SPED Entitlement Grant	1,910,467
SPED Program Improvement	32,535
Early Childhood SPED Program Improvement	3,500
21st Century Community Learning Centers - SPED Enhanced	25,500
21st Century Community Learning Centers	610,469
Mass Grad Carryover	175,000
Perkins Secondary Allocation Grant	174,314
Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program	174,105
Teen Pregnancy Prevention	69,300
Race to the Top (Birth to Grade 3)	41,400
McKinney-Vento	40,000
Subtotal Federal	10,526,148
State Grants	
Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act – Youth	150,114
Essential School Health Services	106,600
Community Adult Learning Centers	433,289
School to Work	8,500
Quality Enhancements in After-school/Out of School Time	20,000
Adult Career Pathways	53,740
Academic Support Services	46,300
Quality Full Day Kindergarten	172,050
Morgan School Turnaround Support	410,000
Subtotal State	1,400,593
Private Grants	
Carlos Vega Fund for Social Justice	500
Linda Schulman Innovation Grant	1,000
Subtotal Private	1,500

Holyoke Public Schools - FY16 Budget Summary	
TOTAL GRANTS*	11,928,241

** Additional grants have been or will be applied for. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will grant additional funds to the district specifically for turnaround support.*

Note: The Holyoke Public Schools also receive a Preschool Expansion Grant of \$1,425,000 from the Department of Early Education and Care; most of the grant is passed through to community partners providing preschool expansion classes for students who are not enrolled in the Holyoke Public Schools.

**Appendix D: Holyoke Public Schools Level 5 District Local Stakeholder Group
Recommendations to the Commissioner and Receiver
Submitted July 10, 2015**

The Holyoke Public Schools were designated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education as chronically underperforming (Level 5) on April 28, 2015. Massachusetts law indicates that within 30 days of a district being designated chronically underperforming, the Commissioner and Receiver shall convene a local stakeholder group to solicit the group's recommendations for the Commissioner's and Receiver's Level 5 district turnaround plan.

The Holyoke Public Schools' Local Stakeholder Group was convened on Wednesday, May 27, 2015. The statute allowed 45 days for the Local Stakeholder Group to complete its work; the group met five times during this period. The membership of the group, which includes representation as outlined in G.L. c. 69, §1K(b) is listed on the following pages.

All of the meetings were open to the public. Except for the first meeting, all other meetings were video recorded and posted on the Holyoke Public Schools' website. All meetings were led by facilitators.

The Holyoke Public Schools' Local Stakeholder Group worked diligently to execute its charge to provide recommendations to the Commissioner and Receiver as they create the turnaround plan for the district; these recommendations are designed to maximize the rapid academic achievement of students.

The Local Stakeholder Group submitted the following letter and recommendations to the Commissioner and Receiver on July 10, 2015, within the 45 day window required by statute. The Commissioner and Receiver reviewed and considered all of the recommendations submitted.

**A Letter to Dr. Steven Zrike, Receiver of the Holyoke Public Schools and Dr. Mitchell Chester,
Commissioner of MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, from the
Members of the Holyoke Public Schools Local Stakeholder Group**

July 10, 2015

Dear Commissioner Chester and Dr. Zrike:

The members of the Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) of the Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) are pleased to present you with our recommendations. Thank you for the assignment, Commissioner Chester. And thank you, Dr. Zrike, for your pledge to consider our recommendations with care. It has been our honor to do this work, and we have taken it very seriously.

All stakeholders are committed to helping the district and Dr. Zrike in developing and implementing the turnaround plan. We believe that the needs of our students, families, teachers and staff are critical, and therefore, we respectfully request that the turnaround plan be created and implemented with purposeful urgency.

We would welcome an opportunity in the coming weeks to meet with you to discuss and explain our work. We would ask for and encourage you to maintain ongoing communication with the members of the Holyoke community. We also ask that this communication employ a variety of media, not just limited to email and computer-based, so as to reach the maximum number of people.

Our Process

Over the past 45 days, we met five times for a total of 14.5 hours (the full meeting schedule can be found below). In rapid succession, we received your charge from MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston; established norms to guide our work; asked for and received in-depth data and presentations from HPS and ESE staff, community partners and our own members; engaged in spirited debate about the most pressing challenges and promising current and future strategies; proposed and posted a set of draft recommendations; and developed a carefully prioritized set of final recommendations for your consideration.

We have sought out a high degree of interaction with the public: all but the first of our meetings were video-taped. Each meeting's notes, presentations, and draft documents have been posted online (<http://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/localstakeholdersgroup.htm>). With help from ESE and HPS, we offered translation services to members of the LSG and the public, and

translated core documents into Spanish. We have engaged the public at each of our meetings, ranging from 40 to 100 people each time, set up our meetings so that each one included a break to allow for more interaction, and consistently made ourselves available for discourse.

Meeting locations and schedule:

Meeting schedule	Location	Meeting topic
Wednesday, May 27, 2015 3:00-5:00 pm	The Community Room, Holyoke Public Library (250 Chestnut Street, Holyoke)	Introductions, member roles and expectations
Monday, June 1, 2015 3:00-6:00 pm	Kittredge Center, Holyoke Community College (303 Homestead Avenue, Holyoke)	Student supports and special populations
Wednesday, June 10, 2015 3:00-6:00 pm	Leslie Phillips Theater, Holyoke Community College (303 Homestead Avenue, Holyoke)	Family and community engagement
Wednesday, June 17, 2015 3:00-6:00 pm	Picknelly Adult & Family Education Center (206 Maple Street, Holyoke)	Secondary schools
Wednesday, July 1, 2015 2:30-6:00 pm	Picknelly Adult & Family Education Center (206 Maple Street, Holyoke)	Final wrap-up and review of recommendations

Arriving at Our Recommendations

Through this work together, we have identified ten “areas of work” that we believe offer the greatest promise for the future of Holyoke students. We value each of these areas of work highly and do not rank them in priority. Within each of these, we have crafted our shared vision statement. We then offer you our “core recommendation” – stating the recommended approach and strategic direction that sums up our best thinking for that area of work. Then, under the twin banners of these visions and core recommendations, we have made a set of specific recommendations, with our highest priority recommendations listed first. LSG members voted democratically to determine the prioritization of the specific recommendations.

Recommendations containing the same primary numerical label denote an equal amount of votes. The secondary alphabetical label is used for reference purposes only; it does not indicate any priority order (e.g. recommendations marked 2a and 2b received the same number of votes, and were second in the priority ranking of overall recommendations for that section).

On the Issues of Affordability, Sustainability and Scalability

We have observed the following set of norms in doing this work: Encourage full participation and listen respectfully to all LSG voices; Check for understanding; Balance advocacy with inquiry;

Make recommendations that are affordable, sustainable, and scalable. Of these, only the last – to make recommendations that are affordable, sustainable and scalable – has proven difficult. While we recognize that budgetary constraints within Holyoke Public Schools are real and persistent, we are also aware that the resources for learning and schooling opportunities in HPS pale by comparison with the resources of the public school systems of many other Massachusetts communities. It is imperative that more sustainable financial resources be made available from the Commonwealth, the City, and through private sources and corporate fundraising. We have striven to offer recommendations that HPS can implement within tight budget constraints, so that promising and effective initiatives can become sustainable over time.

At the same time, we know that high functioning schools and successful students emerge in contexts of carefully targeted resources and opportunities to innovate. We have therefore taken every opportunity to recommend strategies that may increase HPS access to partnerships and resources that all students, educators and families require in order for students to achieve at high levels. You will note these throughout the document.

Three Core Values

Three strong themes have emerged from our work:

We believe in this community and in its many strengths, and we believe that building on our strengths is essential for success. In our work, we tackled the hard issues directly, from the unacceptably low academic achievement of our student body, to the inadequacy of our response to the non-academic needs of students and families, to the urgent requirement to recognize and engage the cultural, language and learning differences of students, with high expectations for students and for schools. At the same time, we repeatedly affirmed the assets, resources and capacities of HPS and its community. These assets include, first and foremost, our students, intelligent and brimming with potential; our families, whose determination to do the right thing for their children has been a guiding light for this LSG team; our educators, whose efforts on behalf of students are driven by strong commitments to opportunity and by high levels of professionalism; and the diversity of community and civic institutions surrounding the schools. These strengths form an excellent foundation on which to build.

The educators, families, and civic and community leaders of Holyoke and the region – together with their institutions – stand ready to help you. We know that our service as LSG members concludes with this communication to you. However, we do not expect to quit; to a person, each of the members of the LSG has a strong willingness, even eagerness, to continue to

support your efforts and the efforts of the Holyoke Public Schools to successfully advance the education of all students. The many organizations that we represent share this feeling.

The evidence is clear: high expectations, collaboration, and the willingness to work through differences are the core ingredients to achieving results. *We offer our own experience as evidence of the power of this approach. As a diverse team, many of whose members did not know one another before, the LSG is demonstrating what works: intensive, collaborative effort and a shared sense of urgency, all focused on achieving big improvements. We hope this spirit of ambitious, inclusive teamwork will be a powerful common theme in the work ahead.*

Sincerely,

The Members of the Local Stakeholder Group of the Holyoke Public Schools

Members of the Local Stakeholder Group

Position, per statute	LSG members
The superintendent, or a designee	1) Paul Hyry-Dermith – Assistant Superintendent, Holyoke Public Schools
School committee chair, or a designee	2) Mayor Alex Morse – Chair, Holyoke Public Schools School Committee
Local teachers’ union president, or a designee	3) Gus Morales – President, Holyoke Teachers Association
A selection of administrators from the district, chosen by the Commissioner from among volunteers from the district	4) Jacqueline Glasheen – Principal; Kelly Full Service Community School 5) Vionette Escudero – Associate Principal; Dean Technical High School
A selection of teachers from the district, chosen by the local teacher’s union	6) Shelley Whelihan – Lt. Elmer J. McMahon Elementary School 7) Brigetann Reilly – Dean Technical High School
A selection of parents from the district chosen by the local parent organization	8) Jennifer Keitt – Maurice A. Donahue Elementary School 9) Marie Auguste – Morgan Full Service Community School 10) Vilma Soto – Peck-Lawrence Full Service Community School 11) Edgardo Camacho – E.N. White School
Representatives of applicable state and local social service, health, and child welfare agencies chosen by the Commissioner	12) Debra Sicilia – Director of Areas for Holyoke and Greenfield, Department of Children and Families 13) Yasmin Otero – Regional Director; Department of Transitional Assistance
Representatives of applicable state and local workforce development agencies chosen by the Commissioner, as applicable	14) David Cruise – President and CEO; Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. 15) Bill Ennen – Project Director, Regional Programs; Innovation Institute at MassTech Collaborative
A representative of an early education and care provider chosen by the Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care, or for middle or high schools, a representative of the higher education community selected by the	16) Stephen C. Huntley - Executive Director; Valley Opportunity Council 17) Jeffrey Hayden – Vice President of Community Relations; Holyoke Community College

Secretary of Education	
A member of the community appointed by the Chief Executive of the city or town	18) Erin Hebert , Holyoke High School class of 2014; Yale University class of 2018

Facilitators:

1. Andrew Bundy, Partner; Community Matters
2. David Castelline, Consultant, Teachers21
3. John D'Auria, President; Teachers21

ESE Staff:

1. Lauren Woo; Educational Specialist

**Holyoke Public Schools Local Stakeholder Group
Recommendations to the Commissioner and Receiver**

I. Cultural Responsiveness and Competence:

Vision: *Students, parents and educators in the HPS feel themselves to be a part of a community of learners that is knowledgeable about and respectful of each student's and family's race, culture, and language, and taps this knowledge and respect to inform teaching and learning practices throughout the district.*

Core recommendation: *In all aspects of its work – from curriculum development, to teaching, professional development, family and community engagement, and all other core teaching and learning activities – HPS actively supports all educators and staff to engage in a steady commitment to culturally sustaining and relevant work.*

1. Recognize that achieving and maintaining cultural competence (through PD/trainings) is a core requirement for all adults working in HPS, including guidance counselors and case managers. These trainings should focus on all cultures but especially on Latino children and families.
- 2a²⁸. Acknowledge the significance of the fact that 79% of HPS students are Hispanic, and only 27% of HPS staff are people of color; 10% of HPS teachers are Hispanic.
- 2b. Hire more teachers who speak Spanish.
3. Understand that for many parents, "...the most culturally responsive thing an educator can do is to make the effort to get to know my child and my family."
4. Further acknowledge that "it is up to us." All adults who are a part of HPS, now, must create a positive cultural experience for students and adults. While new and ongoing efforts to diversify the teaching and administrative staff of HPS are critical (see X. *Talent Recruitment, Development and Retention* recommendations, below), in the near term, the job of creating a culturally responsive classroom, school and district falls to those adults and students currently in the system.

II. Parent, Family and Community Engagement:

Vision: *Every parent in the community feels welcomed and respected in their child's school, and has a strong sense of how they can be active supporters of their child's learning. Community organizations and regional agencies play an active role in supporting schools, families, students and educators with programming that is carefully aligned with the mission of HPS and the vision and priorities of individual schools.*

²⁸ Recommendations containing the same primary numerical label denote an equal amount of votes. The secondary alphabetical label is used for reference purposes only; it does not indicate any priority order (e.g. recommendations marked 2a and 2b received the same number of votes, and were second in the priority ranking of overall recommendations for that section).

Core Recommendation: *Place family and community engagement at the center of the HPS Turnaround Plan, regardless of the structures and programs involved.*

- 1a.** Create a plan to improve communication with families and hold school leaders accountable for increased family engagement.
- 1b.** Implement best practices from Holyoke's Full Service Community Schools program (FSCS) in all HPS schools, with an emphasis on creating a welcoming environment for all parents. (We do not recommend that all HPS schools become FSCS schools, just that the best practices from them be applied across HPS.)
- 2a.** Ensure that out-of-school time programming, including district or community based summer programming, is focused on activities that are aligned with the district goals of accelerating student achievement and improving the high school graduation rate.
- 2b.** Create adult learning opportunities for parents/families.
- 2c.** Hire a parent coordinator/advocate in every building.
- 3a.** Understand and capitalize on the critical nature of parent engagement in the development of language.
- 3b.** Provide teachers with professional development assistance in engaging parents.
- 4a.** Continue to strengthen the connection between home language and school language, as is done through the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI).
- 4b.** Create resources for parents to support their students at home even when their first language is not English.
- 5a.** Continue the FSCS practice of requiring partner organizations to design or re-design their programming to align effectively with their HPS school partner(s).
- 5b.** Increase accountability for all HPS professional staff to improve family and community engagement so that outcomes can be tracked and improvement plans consistently applied.
- 5c.** Closely examine the role that Lawrence Community Works is fulfilling in the Lawrence turnaround effort for possible replication in Holyoke. The LSG believes there are many business and civic organizations who will want to bring resources in support of Holyoke Public Schools. The Mayor and Superintendent in Lawrence have each specifically called out the important role Lawrence Community Works is fulfilling, especially in regards to the coordination and alignment of resources for children and families which strengthens the conditions for students and families outside of the typical school day.
- 6a.** Create an overarching structure to help coordinate outside service providers.
- 6b.** Preserve programs that are working in the district.
- 6c.** Continue to encourage parent volunteers and leaders in all schools.
- 6d.** Create a centralized calendar of events that includes culturally relevant holidays and activities for parents to engage in.

7. Ensure strong alignment between each program and school.

III. Curriculum and Instruction:

Vision: *Each HPS school offers its students a full, stimulating, and academically enriching curriculum which will contain elements unique to each school, but which is fundamentally aligned, across schools, with a common set of high expectations.*

Core Recommendation: *Coordinate and implement an effective, research-based and culturally responsive K-12 curriculum consistently at all schools, implementing, improving and sustaining it over time.*

1. Adequately train teachers and leadership on effective implementation of a culturally sustaining and relevant curriculum, including accountability measures.
- 2a. Maintain and expand honors and AP courses.
- 2b. Support and train teachers on the integration of arts into education.
3. Sustain the current efforts of effective HELI programs (see II. Parent, Family and Community recommendations, above).
4. Create research-based curriculum consistency across the district.
5. Include teacher leaders in every step of curriculum work.
6. Bolster comprehensive sex education using research-based curriculum.
7. Create a career pathway model K-14 or K-16.
8. Engage teachers in planning professional development.

IV. Instructional Support:

Vision: *The District and each school focuses with a laser-like precision on the importance of high quality pedagogy that engages all learners and stretches them to grow as thinkers. HPS teachers experience their classrooms, schools and district as supportive adult learning environments, where high expectations for educators and students thrive in a culture of a common vision, shared practice and rigorous peer exchange and support.*

Core Recommendation: *Give educators at all levels access to robust professional development, models of instruction, opportunities to see exemplars of high quality, and steady support.*

1. Focus professional development on targeted and specific areas that respond to the highest needs of teachers and the greatest potential to positively impact student learning (cultural competency, support for implementing Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) instructional strategies, reading instruction, etc.)
2. Bring back use of the professional development Catalog (catalog of “cost free options” for professional development (after-school, during the summer) that the district would compile and put out. Educators could elect to take the courses).
3. Increase the capacity of principals to provide effective feedback to teachers in their implementation of SEI strategies.

4. Examine the consistency of support for educators across all schools.
5. Give school leaders autonomy within their buildings to support teachers as needed, based on building/population data.

V. Student Support:

Vision: *All HPS students have reliable access to the social and emotional support required for learning.*

Core Recommendation: *Focus intently on what HPS can control, and commit to it fully. Re-commit HPS resources to the most successful HPS school-based responses to unmet student needs. Expand partnerships and grant-funded projects with community and regional resource organizations that are expressly designed to meet the demand for student support.*

1. Develop a plan to increase student attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism. Use data to address any patterns for sub groups.
2. Recognize, as neither an excuse nor an insurmountable obstacle, the simple reality that every student has a set of basic needs – many of them non-academic – that must be met if she or he is to learn successfully.
3. Create an alternative school for students who have difficulties in the typical environment to meet all their educational, emotional and social needs.
- 4a. Hire qualified counselors for mental health.
- 4b. Expand student support to meet the social and emotional needs of students, with particular focus on high school students.
- 5a. Develop an effective social skills curriculum, consistently implemented at all schools.
- 5b. Using multiple sources of data and information, carefully and rigorously examine the effectiveness of current programs such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Justice. Where this examination supports work that is happening, continue, and expand it; where warranted, make changes to improve supports and results for students.
- 5c. Expand targeted social skills classes (e.g., Tier 2).
- 5d. Create a comprehensive social skills curriculum available to all our students that addresses age level concerns and is taught by a full-time, licensed professional.
- 5e. Support and establish Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) in all schools.

VI. Special Education:

Vision: *Educators, families and students have high expectations for the academic and learning success of all students with disabilities and have access to an array of resources that are coordinated and aligned to ensure student success.*

Core Recommendation: *Equip educators with the knowledge, skills and resources to adapt instruction and curriculum to meet the unique needs of learners while maintaining the highest*

expectations for achievement. This means addressing not only the skill-development needs of educators and providing the resources needed, but also sharing a clear belief that high levels of achievement are possible.

1. Ensure that all identified special education students are taught in the least restrictive and most appropriate educational setting and are provided with a continuum of instructional programming and an array of supports and services.
2. Re-evaluate students that full-inclusion models who aren't succeeding – determine the best educational setting based on these new evaluations.
- 3a. Review school staffing and budget allocation formula to ensure district-wide equity of educational programming, staff deployment, and student services and supports.
- 3b. Provide greater guidance to parents about the options and rights for special education students. Provide instructions for parents about the types of questions/services they should be requesting for special education students.
- 3c. Examine the referral process for access to special education services.
- 3d. Hire test proctors rather than using special education teachers (see X. *Talent Recruitment, Development and Retention* recommendations, below).
- 4a. Provide a parent coordinator/advocate in every school.
- 4b. Provide more staff members so students who need it can have 1:1 attention.

VII. English Language Learners:

Vision: *All students learning English have a strong, consistent support system for doing so, with high expectations for English language fluency in reading, speaking and writing; every HPS student graduates fluent in English; speaking more than one language is widely treated and experienced – by students, parents and educators alike – as a good thing, as an advantage.*

Core Recommendation: *Continue to build capacity within HPS, among individual educators and teams of teachers and school leaders, to actively support English language learners (ELLs) in all aspects of curriculum and instruction.*

1. Recognize and promote bilingualism.
- 2a. Increase number of teachers completing SEI course to 100 percent; create incentives for teachers to complete course; partner with area colleges to assist in SEI implementation.
- 2b. Create opportunities for parents to learn and interact in English.
- 2c. Create and implement ELL curriculum for all grade levels.
- 2d. Support teachers implementing SEI instructional strategies with professional development and principal feedback.
3. Add World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)/deeper practice in ELL instruction; add accountability measures for SEI/WIDA.
4. Provide parents the option of placing their children in bilingual programs.

VIII. Pre-K and Kindergarten:

Vision: *All of Holyoke's youngest children arrive in HPS early learning centers, Kindergarten and elementary schools with a high level of readiness – ready to play, ready to be a part of a group, ready to learn – because of their early and frequent engagement in early learning at home, early childhood education, and high quality pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) and Kindergarten programming.*

Core Recommendation: *HPS increases seats for pre-K and Kindergarten to the maximum extent possible, partners closely with pre-K and community providers to increase the number of children served, and vigorously supports regional and statewide efforts to expand age 0-5 supports for families.*

1. Achieve universal, dual-language pre-K for all students.
2. Advocate, with other civic leaders, for mandatory Kindergarten.
3. Give pre-K and out of school partners access to student data to measure outcomes.
4. Aim preschool efforts towards key readiness qualities and educational milestones.
5. Create exit survey for pre-K families.
6. Understand screening criteria for Kindergarten; articulate it to partners and families.

IX. Secondary Schools and Workforce Development:

Vision: *HPS high school students are immersed in rigorous and stimulating learning experiences that engage them deeply, prepare them well for college and the workforce, and challenge them to embrace academic, social and leadership responsibilities both in school and in their family and community lives.*

Core Recommendation: *Develop powerful, aligned programs for William J. Dean Technical High School (Dean) and Holyoke High School (HHS). At Dean, consistently improve a series of career pathway learning experiences that provide high levels of post-secondary and career readiness that are linked, through strong partnerships, with local employers and higher learning institutions. At both Dean and HHS, offer students an increasingly personalized set of rigorous learning opportunities; more advanced placement, independent study and dual enrollment opportunities; and consistently rigorous academic experiences tailored to the passions and interests of students. Strive for alignment of the two schools, creating a shared, high expectations culture.*

- 1a. Examine the performance and experiences of former HPS students at Holyoke Community College to learn how HPS schools can better prepare and support students.
- 1b. Support a community-wide effort, with strong higher education leadership, to create an Urban Teacher Academy that would help HPS students become teachers, and

develop a pool of HPS graduates who can become HPS teachers. (See this recommendation in X. *Talent Recruitment, Development and Retention*, also.)

2. Strengthen connections between Dean and the college and business communities.
3. Conduct an assessment of the Chapter 74 approved technical programs at Dean to determine its responsiveness to documented local labor market demand.
- 4a. Rally business engagement to support and strengthen school initiatives.
- 4b. Create powerful alternative school options for students who need them.
- 4c. Create a college-going culture for all students; emphasize college for all.
- 5a. Incorporate work-based learning opportunities as an integral part of a comprehensive program to increase the high school graduation rate.
- 5b. Hire attendance officers to work with chronically absent students.

X. Talent Recruitment, Development and Retention:

Vision: *Each HPS educator and staff person experiences their school and the district as stimulating and rewarding learning environments that reliably attract excellent candidates and vigorously support the hiring, development, continuous learning, leadership and retention of HPS teachers, administrators, and staff.*

Core Recommendation: *Create a strong, spelled out plan for how HPS will attract, retain and develop highly qualified teachers and administrators.*

1. Create a robust plan to recruit highly qualified teachers.
- 2a. Examine the implementation of the teacher evaluation process to ensure the process and protocols are applied with fidelity.
- 2b. Create a more effective and efficient system for providing qualified substitute teachers so that current staff are not pulled away from normal duties to cover for absences (see this recommendation in VI. *Special Education* recommendations, above).
- 3a. Create an Urban Teacher Academy, in partnership with local universities and colleges, to increase pipeline of teachers from HPS back to HPS – define goals, measures of success (see this recommendation in IX. *Secondary Schools and Workforce Development* above).
- 3b. Develop a strategic plan for increasing HPS staff diversity, with concrete benchmarks for progress, to which HPS holds itself publicly accountable.
- 4a. Hire more Spanish speaking teachers and create opportunities for English speaking teachers to learn Spanish.
- 4b. Create plan to reduce the turnover rate of teachers.
- 4c. Offer leadership training for teachers to learn how most effectively to engage and support paraprofessionals to increase student learning.

- 5a. Strengthen targeted professional development for paraprofessionals and strengthen pathways for paraprofessionals to become professional educators.
- 5b. Strengthen paraprofessional and specials/co-curricular teachers' understanding of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), accommodations, and how to provide accommodations.
- 5c. Create a mentor program, especially for bilingual employees.
- 6a. Make more intentional use of ELL and special education teachers in their respective roles, limiting the use of these teachers as substitutes and test proctors (see this recommendation in VI. *Special Education* above).
- 6b. Continue to work with staff on cultural proficiency.
- 6c. Recruit Holyoke graduates; encourage Holyoke students to pursue a career in teaching.
- 7. Create pathways for teachers to become administrators.

Other areas discussed:

The following topics/areas were discussed and debated. The LSG members held a variety of opinions that did not coalesce into a clear recommendation.

- Views on Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) run from total support to strong skepticism about their effectiveness.
- Some view the 90-minute block as counterproductive, others support it.
- Some view K-8 schools as problematic, others are not sure. The LSG recommends that the receiver and Commissioner review the current district grade organizational configuration to determine the most effective systemic educational delivery model to accelerate student achievement.
- The team debated about whether and how to strengthen the team/intervention process, including Tier 2 interventions and links with out of school time partners, prior to referral for evaluation for possible special education placement.

Appendices:

The following documents were submitted by individual members of the LSG who requested they be sent with the official Holyoke LSG recommendations. The LSG members agreed to share these documents as appendices; they were not reviewed formally or voted on by the LSG.

- 1. Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. Recommendations
- 2. HTA's Recommendations

Appendix #1: Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. Recommendations

1. Review the current district grade organizational configuration to determine the most effective systemic educational delivery model to accelerate student achievement.
2. Review school staffing and budget allocation formula to ensure district-wide equity of educational programming, staff deployment and student services and supports.
3. Develop a district wide process to increase opportunities to accelerate shared governance procedures in each school to create culture of collaboration and communication.
4. Examine the implementation of the contracted teacher evaluation process to ensure the process and protocols are applied with fidelity and in accordance with the intent and purpose of the language.
5. Ensure that all identified special education students are taught in the least restrictive and most appropriate educational setting and are provided with a continuum of instructional programming and an array of supports and services.
6. Incorporate work-based learning opportunities as an integral part of a comprehensive program to increase the high school graduation rate.
7. Conduct an assessment of the Chapter 74 approved technical programs at William J. Dean Technical High School to determine their relevancy to respond to documented local labor market demand.
8. Ensure that the Chapter 74 mandated Program Advisory Committees in each of the Chapter 74 approved technical programs at William J. Dean Technical High School are properly constituted, reflect the required membership as mandated by DESE regulations, and meet on a regular and consistent basis.
9. Ensure that out-of-school time programming, including district or community based summer programming, is focused on activities that are aligned with the districts goals of accelerating student achievement and improving the high school graduation rate.

10. Review the scope, scheduling and content of the district's teacher professional development program to allow for district-wide, in-school, or external programming opportunities that will improve teaching practice.

Respectfully Submitted,

Signed by David Cruise

David M. Cruise

Appendix #2: HTA's Recommendations

Holyoke Teachers Association Turnaround Plan Recommendations for Local Stakeholder Group

In order to ensure that the turnaround plan in the Holyoke school district addresses the complex, underlying causes of educational underperformance declared by the Board of Education, and in order to address the real educational, social, health, and economic needs of Holyoke students and their parents, the Local Stakeholder Group should include the following in its recommendations to the Receiver, provided pursuant to G.L. c. 69, section 1K(c):

- (1)** Steps to address social service and health needs of students at the school and their families, to help students arrive and remain at school ready to learn; provided, however, that this may include mental health substance abuse screening:
- (2)** Steps to improve or expand child welfare services and, as appropriate, law enforcement services in the school community, in order to promote a safe and secure learning environment:
- (3)** Steps to improve workforce development services provided to students and their families at the school, to provide students and families with meaningful employment skills and opportunities.
- (4)** Steps to address achievement gaps for limited English-proficient, special education and low-income students:
- (5)** Alternative English Language Learning programs for limited English proficient students, notwithstanding chapter 71A:
- (6)** A budget for the district including any additional funds to be provided:

The HTA has grouped their recommendations into the following categories, using the law as its guiding principle:

- I. Health and Well-Being**
- II. Restructuring Special Education Services**
- III. Restructuring English language learner (ELL) Services, including the Culture of all our Learners**
- IV. Safe and Secure Learning: Student Learning Conditions and Teacher Working Conditions, one in the same.**
- V. Community Workforce Development**
- VI. Budget**

I. Health and Well-Being

Social Service and Health Needs of Students & Families

1. A School Doctor hired to work with and oversee all health care personnel in the District
2. One School Psychologist for each of the following grade spans at each school: PreK-2; 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12. This person should be experienced in issues for the appropriate developmental level.
3. One certified, trained Social Worker or more assigned to each school who will oversee and coordinate the physical, mental, social and emotional health care needs of all students in that school.
4. One Parent/Community Outreach Worker or more at each school who will oversee and coordinate the services students and families receive, be responsible for communicating with parents/guardians, and will work with the Social Worker to help meet all the needs of the child and family
5. Two Nurses at each school, to handle, coordinate, and communicate about health needs and issues, scheduled in flexible shifts so that the office is always open during the school day.
6. One trained Crisis Intervention Specialist at each grade level (PreK-2; 3-5; 6-8; 9-12) to handle the social/emotional issues that arise.

Improve and Expand Child Welfare Services

1. One certified, trained Social Worker or more assigned to each school who will oversee and coordinate the physical, mental, social and emotional health care needs of all students in that school.
2. One Parent/Community Outreach Worker or more at each school who will oversee and coordinate the services students and families receive, be responsible for communicating with parents/guardians, and will work with the Social Worker to help meet all the needs of the child and family. This person will also do home visits to help with issues that may be stemming from the home environment.
3. More guidance counselors, adjustment counselors, transition counselors and intervention specialists.
4. Add Behavior Interventionists to all buildings
5. In order for Holyoke to realize its full potential and help its students achieve at the highest levels, the Holyoke teachers feel that class size must be addressed. A potential framework for such a discussion would include setting maximum limits in how many students are in a class based on grade level, such as, 12-15 in preK-2, 15-18 in 3-6, and 18-22 in 7-12.

6. Part of having a full, well rounded, enriching educational experience, students must have access to programs such as music, art, extracurricular activities regardless of their academic performance. ALL students, no matter what their educational challenges or issues are, MUST have equal access to these important components of a well-rounded education. The constraints of scheduling or personnel must not dictate whether or not a certain population of students receives these experiences.
7. Adequately fund and provide extracurricular activities and sports to both high schools, so that students from each school can fully participate on any team they so chose.
8. Adequately fund and provide extracurricular activities and trips to all students, regardless of family's financial ability to pay, to all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status or the school's PTO's ability to raise funds. Example, if one 5th grade class goes on a trip to Plymouth Plantation, all 5th graders in the district are afforded the same opportunity.
9. Each school year, each grade level, is provided with an annual, fully funded field trip to a location, outside of the general Holyoke area to a museum, historical location, etc. to expose all children to the experiences that are outside the limits of their socioeconomic status.
10. Reinstate a PTO at each school, no matter what grade level. Actively recruit people to serve on these committees to support the schools.

II. Restructuring Special Education Services

1. Consolidated, Consistent, Equitable Referral Process for all Services: There should be one process to follow to get student services such as speech therapy, Special Ed services, etc. This process, currently known as Building Based Support Teams, or BBST, must be consistently implemented, composed, and run across all schools. Currently, there are 13 schools and 13 ways the BBSTs are run.
2. Consistent, Equitable Supports and Staffing in all schools. In order to equitably serve and educate the students of Holyoke, each school must have consistent and equitable supports, services and staffing. This way, if a child moves from one school to another midway through the year, his services will remain the same. (i.e. all schools, at all grade levels MUST have RISE, functional, TIP and Replacement model classrooms to serve students with a variety of needs.)
3. Staffing for special education services should include staffing levels that allow for co-teachers to be assigned full-time to each classroom.
4. Employ, train and assign sufficient paraprofessional staff to provide dedicated classroom and 1:1 support for all students on IEPs.

5. Educate the Special Education and ELL parents as to their rights under the law. Offer free classes to the Special Education and ELL parents about advocating for their students.
6. Provide the parents with the “Know your Rights” pamphlet at every meeting. These have not been given out in the last 5 years or more. Provide these in both languages.
7. Mandatory Educational Advocates provided for Special Education and ELL parents for all IEP meetings.
8. Additional school psychologists so the testing does not take too long. Special Education teachers should not be doing the testing or running their own meetings.
9. Develop a district-wide special education referral process that simplifies paperwork. All Special Education referrals should be monitored for timely responses, i.e. within 10 days.
10. Provide ongoing, district wide professional development opportunities for all staff to develop shared understanding and strategies for working with students who have experienced trauma, homelessness, transiency, mental health issues, substance abuse, or other issues as identified by the faculty and staff.
11. Provide ongoing, multi-lingual workshops for parents and caregivers on services, strategies and supports for issues such as trauma, homelessness, transiency, mental health issues, substance abuse, rights under Special Education laws, rights for students in ELL programs and accessing district and community services.
12. Limit the ratio of SPED and ELL students to regular education students in each classroom, regardless of the number of staff assigned to the classroom.
13. Return to the full Inclusion model. Caseload management is NOT working.
14. Consistent, equitable supports across all grade levels, at all schools. Return to the co-teaching model with one regular education teacher and one special education teacher in the classroom.
15. Expedite the referral process. Teachers should not have to implement all parts of the DCAP before a referral is started. The process is too cumbersome, too detailed. Many teachers are so overwhelmed with paperwork that they do not know how to complete nor have been trained to complete.
16. Provide appropriate support staff and services for all students.
17. Ensure that ELL and Special Education teachers are ONLY used to provide direct services to their students. They are not used for duties, study halls, testing, substituting, etc. Meetings and paperwork times are scheduled into their day. They do not take place during times that teachers are scheduled to service the students.
18. Do not schedule all ELL and Special Education students all into one class. These learning issues cannot occur within the same constraints.

19. Recreate the Central Office Team that was eliminated in 2007. The team included the OTs, PTs, psychologists, evaluators and all Special Education personnel, with a secretary dedicated to them, to handle testing, referrals, etc. There were two district wide evaluators, one bilingual and one monolingual, who handled all the testing. The team was centralized. They handled all aspects of testing. The team met and discussed students on a regular basis. All files, referrals, etc. went through this office. All Special Education referrals handled by the same staff, in a consistent manner, following a specific protocol. (For more information, see Norma Casillas, who was the bilingual evaluator.)
20. Appropriately service students with the specialized teacher who will better serve his/her need. For example, if the student needs a Bilingual Special Education teacher, then that is what should be provided.
21. Additional funding for ELL and Special Education teachers to meet the needs of all the populations.
22. Explicitly define the services provided by the Tiered Support Specialists. Let all teachers know what services that these TSSs provide.
23. Explicitly define what type of services that students need during periods such as the Intensive Learning Center, pull out services or Enhancement classes. This time should have a structured task list or curricula to follow. Behaviorally-challenged students should not be sent to these services.

III. Restructuring ELL Services, including the Culture of all our Learners

1. Establish a procedure to regularly review existing ELL programs at a building level to ensure teachers and students get appropriate supports and staffing.
2. Staff each school with sufficient licensed ESL teacher who are assigned to a single grade level and who have specific assignments.
3. Establish multiple ELL programs specifically designed to meet the needs of newcomers, long-term ELLs, ELLs with disabilities, and academic supports for ELLs who are reaching English proficient and students who have exited ELL programs (levels 4, 5, and formerly limited English proficient)
4. Recruit and hire more bilingual educators in all positions, in all areas, in all schools.
5. Services for the Level 4 and 5 ELL students should be provided by an ELL teacher, not a SEI-certified person. A dually licensed teacher cannot focus on content and language acquisition at the same time and accomplish either fully.
6. Offer ongoing, no-cost SEI Endorsement and ongoing SEI professional development opportunities for all educators.
7. See further recommendations for ELLs in next sections.

8. Specialized training provided to staff around issues such as transiency, poverty, trauma, chronic absences, etc.
9. Provide enrichment experiences, such as field trips, specials, and out of classroom experiences
10. Follow the English Language Development guidelines. Do not use a teacher with multiple certifications to cover multiple responsibilities

Culturally responsive recommendations:

1. Include dates, such as Hispanic Heritage month, that will be celebrated along with our traditional holidays/history.
2. Reach out to parents to set up a centralized calendar, activities, events for schools, parents and others, but also include activities to help educate students.
3. Roll out a prepared ELA curriculum across grade levels, which include culturally sensitive literature and resources for the classroom.
4. More resources that students can identify with: LGBTQ literature, Puerto Rican Culture, etc.
5. Teach students and staff how to overcome obstacles in a positive way.
6. Offer all staff Professional Development such as Spanish for Educators, Ethnic Studies and Diversity Training.
7. Offer English Language Learning Lessons to parents at all schools.
8. Continue to work with the Latin@ Educational Advisory Group
9. Add a Puerto Rican History and Culture class to our History offerings.
10. Add Puerto Rican Cultural Education to our curriculum.
11. Reinstitute and restructure the schools' annual celebration of Puerto Rico and the United States.
12. Transitional bilingual education did not work in Holyoke previously because the staff hired were not bilingual, biliterate. We lost many bilingual teachers when they had to pass a literacy test. If we hire people who have the skills, the programs could work.
13. Continue the dual-language education programs at Metcalf.
14. Expand dual-language education programs to offer at least one dual-language classroom at each building and each grade level.
15. Offer dual-language content area courses at both high schools.
16. Offer courses and pathways for educators to qualify for the Transitional Bilingual Learning Endorsement (603 CMR 7.14)
17. While we realize it was repealed in 2002, we believe that the strongest and most prudent course of action to address the ELL population in Holyoke would be to reintroduce bilingual education in the schools.
18. Hire truly bilingual, biliterate teachers to teach the two-way bilingual programs, to promote literacy in both languages.

19. We favor a two-way program as is being piloted at Metcalf.

IV. Safe and Secure Learning: Student Learning Conditions and Teacher Working Conditions, one in the same.

A fully serviced and staff alternative school

1. Establish a Pre-K through Grade 12 Alternative School, which services students from pre-K through 12 grade, which includes the following:
 - 1.1. An Alternative, Therapeutic Setting for our students with Social/Emotional Issues:
The current Therapeutic Intervention Programs (TIP) are not therapeutic. These students need a quiet, well-established routine, in a safe place, that allows them to learn and receive the emotional supports and therapies that they need.
 - 1.2. A Behavior Intervention program for students who are consistently off track, disruptive to the learning environment, and the educational progress who do not qualify for Special Education Behavioral Support. This program will concentrate on correcting the disruptive behaviors in order that they might return to the least restrictive environment.
 - 1.3. A Behavior Alternative program for our students who cannot comply with the behavior norms of a regular setting. Currently, most of these students are serviced in TIP, with our most emotionally fragile students. These students need a separate, structured program of their own, staffed by Restorative Justice trained personnel to work with and around their needs. There also needs to be a correctly equipped program to effectively and separately deal with these children. They need to be provided with supports and systems that will most effectively facilitate their learning and correct their behavior.

Social Skills and Discipline

1. A comprehensive Social Skills curriculum taught at each school, which address age level appropriate issues/concerns taught by a full-time, licensed teacher. (Example of a Middle School program is available at <http://www.cccoe.net/social/skillslist.htm>)
2. Fully enforce and follow through with the Student Code of Conduct as written. Discipline needs to be consistent in all schools. It is currently the number one complaint for all teachers at the middle school and high school level.

Safe and Secure Learning Environment

1. An assigned, consistent School Resource Officer assigned to each 6-8 and 9-12 school daily. Each of the middle and high schools needs a regular SRO presence to handle the variety of community issues that arise among adolescents and teenagers. The SRO will

provide students and staff a safe person to go to report such things as bullying, threats of violence, drugs etc.

2. An assigned, consistent SRO who visits the PreK-2 and 3-5 schools on a weekly basis. This will help to teach our students that the SRO is another safe adult they can reach out to. This SRO can also help administration deal with issues, such as bullying and violence, that arise even in the earliest grades.
3. Offer restraint and de-escalation training to all staff.
4. Well-written, specific, detailed Emergency Management plans that are written for all emergency type situations. Things such Code Red and Code White should be the same and handled the same through all the schools. These plans should be distributed to all staff and reviewed on a regular basis. These plans should include plans for things such as a fire alarm during inclement weather, blocked exits, delay in fire personnel response, etc.

Curricula, Schools, and Teaching Staff

1. Consistent, fully funded, well researched curricula for all grade and subject levels.
2. Adopt, implement and provide a curriculum and stick with it.
3. Provide teachers who are teaching curricula with a full, paid training to understand and implement the curricula, before he/she are expected to teach the curriculum.
4. Provide teachers with all materials, especially student resources, needed to teach the curricula.
5. Do not use teachers as substitutes, except in an emergency situation. Clearly define what an emergency is for using teachers as substitutes.
6. Centralize services for providing and obtaining substitutes- employ building-based, permanent substitutes and set minimum qualifications and compensation for day-to-day substitutes. (Use Kelly Services, like Chicopee)
7. Eliminate the 90-minute blocks. Students cannot focus for that long.
8. Eliminate K-8. Return to K-5, 6-8, and high school.
9. Return to five schools (K-5), two middle schools (6-8), and two high schools (9-12).
10. Reinstate the K-5 recess of at least 15 minutes or more. This is in addition to their 40 minute (SHOULD be 20 minute eating, 20 minute recess) lunch period. This would be time to go outside, exercise and socialize. All schools must have this opportunity.
11. Technology is widely discussed when speaking of our students achieving in the 21st century, but rarely is the money put in place to back such strong words. If we are to have our students excel in all things, then we have to provide them with the means of doing so. Each classroom must have fully functioning, up-to-date, supplied equipment to meet the needs of the learners. Ideally, each student would have access to a computer for all classes.

12. If we want students in Holyoke to succeed then we have to provide them and their teachers with the supplies needed. The smallest things being absent from the room can be detrimental to the learning process. Each classroom must have adequate supplies such as printer toner, pencils, paper, folders, crayons, scissors, and other necessary implements. There should not be an extensive lag time between when supplies are ordered and when the teacher receives them. Currently, teachers often have to wait months for supplies, such a printer toner, and often wind up buying their own.
13. Eliminate neighborhood schools, get kids out of their neighborhoods and expose them to other parts of the City.

V. Community Workforce Development

Adult Learning Programs for Families & Community

1. Restore the Worker Training Programs offered at Dean Technical: offer vocational and career training for parents at the local high schools, especially in the shops at Dean. Offer parents and other adults the opportunity to improve their skills and expand their knowledge to better support themselves and their children.
2. Coordinate services with CareerPoint and other outside community agencies to offer parents help in training for, interviewing for, getting and keeping better jobs.
3. Target work programs and career services to parenting teens at the middle and high schools levels.
4. Restore a Career Services and Opportunities Office at each of the High Schools: This office, which was disbanded in 2000-2001, provided much needed services to all our high school students. This is the place where students went to work on resumes, write cover letters, get job applications, complete portfolios of vocational work, etc. This office also put students at Holyoke High out on work-study and students at Dean out on co-op. When we lost this office, our students lost a go-to place and person for jobs and career assistance. When we had this office at its services, our students were much better prepared to obtain the part-time jobs, which helped their families stay afloat in many instances.
5. Review the daily schedule at Holyoke High School to better accommodate alternative learning programs, such as internships, work-study and other career services. Maintain the rotating schedule of classes for all the underclassmen. Rotate the schedule for the seniors only. Do not alter the schedule for underclassmen to accommodate this or the outside partners who may be coming in.
6. Review district policies to allow work-study or work-experience to count towards graduation credit at both high schools.
7. Coordinate the work placement coordinators at both schools, so that jobs/positions are made available to all students

8. Expand English as a Second Language classes to the offerings for parents, at night, offered at multiple locations throughout the district, free of cost.
9. Expand offerings of parent-education courses that are currently offered through other local organizations.
10. Field trips to local factories, companies, etc. that revolve around exposing the students to the variety of employment opportunities available to the community.
11. Teacher internships at local factories (School to Career, connecting Activities, Grant 480)
12. Reinstate popular vocational programs, such as Building and Grounds and HVAC to the Dean Technical High School.
13. Add additional popular vocational programs, such as Allied Health and Child Care Services to the Dean Technical High School.

VI. Budget

1. Qualified, full time grant writers, one for each school and one district-wide, to apply, monitor and report on external grant funding.
2. Training for teachers to help them write grants for their classrooms.
3. Professional development for teachers to help them search out and qualify for grants to use in their curriculums.
4. Additional funding for ELL teachers to meet the needs of the populations.
5. In accordance with MGL 69J, the turnaround plan should include an adequate, fully funded budget to fulfill the recommendations that are outlined in this plan.
6. Build a new school. The last new school in Holyoke was Dean in 1989. Seek out money for new buildings. Some of our schools, such as McMahon are very out of date and in desperate need of repairs. Money for these repairs keep getting squashed, where does the money go?
7. Move the School Department Offices out of Suffolk Street into the Lawrence School, the Lynch School (if the Mayor gives it back to the schools) or another School Department or City owned location that will not cost the City \$350, 000 a year to lease.
8. Return Lynch School to the School department as a School Department owned building. This building is built to be a school and completely outfitted to be such. Right now it is sitting vacant and not used.

In closing, in order to ensure that the turnaround plan is being fully implemented and continuously reassessed to determine where adjustments may need to be made, the HTA recommends:

1. That the LSG continue to meet on a quarterly basis to discuss progress and make additional recommendations to the Commissioner and the Receiver. We believe this is

necessary to ensure that the turnaround process is authentic and sustainable in the long run.

2. That the turnaround plan should include joint labor-management committees at both the school and district level to promote continuous teamwork, which will lead to effective implementation and ongoing two-way feedback to better student achievement. This will also ensure that teachers' input is solicited and given meaningful consideration.
3. That the Receiver should commit to ensuring there is a culture of success for educators as well as students, which includes respecting them and valuing their expertise.

Southbridge Public Schools Level 5 District Turnaround Plan

August 25, 2017



August 25, 2017

Students, families, educators, staff, partners, community members, and friends of the Southbridge Public Schools:

We are pleased to share this Plan for turning around the Southbridge Public Schools and continuing the district's journey toward success. Southbridge is rich in diversity, history, and resiliency. Southbridge children deserve a world-class education that leverages these assets and prepares students for the future of possibilities ahead of them. Originally presented in June 2016, this Plan was created after the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and district leaders listened to a large number of students, families, educators, and community members to learn about their hopes and dreams for the community and the values that are important to them. The ideas that emerged from those community meetings, Local Stakeholder Group meetings, and small focus groups led to the creation of the following vision statement for the district:

In the Southbridge Public Schools, ALL students will experience a world-class education and will graduate as engaged citizens who demonstrate the essential skills required for success in college and career.

The following pages detail the Plan for bringing this vision to life. The Plan focuses on improving access to a high-quality education for all Southbridge students and families and was written with attention to the resources, capacity, supports, accountability, and systems needed for success. By focusing on the following key actions, we believe Southbridge educators and community members, working together, will promote the rapid improvement of the district.

- Develop high-quality teaching and leadership district-wide by raising expectations for instructional programs and academic achievement
- Balance teacher and administrator empowerment with accountability for results
- Provide extended time to increase learning opportunities for both students and staff
- Provide students with multiple pathways toward college and career with the supports to reach their full potential
- Leverage partners' knowledge and skills to increase opportunities and provide wraparound support services for students and families
- Engage and support families as partners in supporting the development of their children
- Improve the management, accountability, and coherence of the school system
- Ensure the sustainability of reforms that lead to strong instructional programs

This Turnaround Plan is already resulting in new opportunities for students, teachers, families, and community members, while continuing to develop and improve promising practices.

This Plan is founded upon the firm belief that all Southbridge students deserve the highest-quality education. This Plan is designed to transform Southbridge from a school district where a strong education is the exception to one where an excellent education is the rule. We have every reason to believe that we can and will succeed in this vision.

We know that many of our students and families face distinct challenges. This should only strengthen our resolve to come together and collectively ensure that our children have every opportunity to receive a high-quality education. Our investment in our children is a direct investment in our community.

Great things lie ahead for the Southbridge Public Schools, and we have confidence that the strategies outlined in this Plan will result in significant gains and accomplishments for this community. However, only collectively can we achieve the goals and benchmarks included within this document. The moral imperative we have in front of us is to re-imagine and re-design the future of our schools so that ALL our children gain access to what they need to be successful and contributing members of our community.

We look forward to continuing this partnership in the important work of transforming the Southbridge Public Schools. Throughout the process we will measure our progress and continue to seek input on the implementation of the Plan, working together to ensure its success.

Sincerely,

Signed by Interim Receiver Johnston

Russell Johnston
Interim Receiver
Southbridge Public Schools

Signed by Acting Commissioner Wulfson

Jeff Wulfson
Acting Commissioner
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Executive Summary

Southbridge is a community that is rich in diversity, history, and resiliency. Its children deserve access to a world-class education that leverages these assets and prepares students for a future full of possibilities. For over a decade, the Southbridge community has been underserved. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education first identified Southbridge as an underperforming (Level 4) district in 2004. Since that time, it has been unable to meet the state-approved benchmarks in its improvement plan in a timely manner. Since 2010, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has provided the Southbridge Public Schools (SPS or Southbridge) with targeted assistance funds to support instruction and data analysis as well as funds to hire a staff member to support district-level improvement. These supports, however, proved to be no match for the challenges this community has faced with regard to leadership and governance. In the 6 years since 2010, the district has had 7 superintendents and 7 high-school principals. During this time, a total of 43 individuals have moved in and out of the 9 top school and district leadership positions. In addition, over time the school committee has adopted incoherent and unproductive approaches to the roles and responsibilities that are characteristic of high-performing policy bodies. Such conditions made it extremely unlikely that the school district would achieve the significant improvement gains this community deserves---unless there were some dramatic changes.

Following the Southbridge District Review conducted in October 2015,¹ the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education made the strong recommendation that Southbridge be named a “chronically underperforming” (Level 5) district, allowing the leadership and governance of the district to be directed by a Receiver. A Receiver has the authority of both the superintendent and the school committee, and reports directly to the Commissioner. This recommendation was accepted by a vote of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in January 2016. On May 2, 2016, Dr. Jessica Huizenga became the Receiver for SPS. Dr. Huizenga participated in the creation of the district’s turnaround plan and served as receiver for the 2016-2017 school year. On May 30, 2017, Dr. Russell Johnston was appointed interim receiver for the district.

In 2016, Dr. Huizenga began her work by meeting with students, families, educators, and community members, reviewing reports and analyzing the strengths and challenges of the district. The recommendations of the Local Stakeholder Group (LSG), which convened representatives from teachers, parents, town government, and the community, as well as local health, workforce, early education, higher education, and other stakeholders, were especially important.² (See Appendix D to review the LSG recommendations.) From this rich input, a new vision for the Southbridge Public Schools was crafted:

In the Southbridge Public Schools, ALL students will experience a world-class education, and will graduate as engaged citizens who demonstrate the essential skills required for success in college and career.

This high and worthy vision requires a strategic plan. The system—including structures and culture—required to make this vision a reality does not currently exist in Southbridge. This Turnaround Plan,

1 Center for District and School Accountability, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2015). *District Review Report (DRR), Southbridge Public Schools*. See: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/district-reports/nolevel/2015-0277.pdf>

2 See M.G.L. c. 69, §1K(B): <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter69/Section1K>

which draws upon a variety of research-based resources and guidance about best practices, establishes such a system.

In order to achieve dramatic improvements to the educational experience of students in Southbridge and to attain the district's vision, all Southbridge educators and staff will be called upon to focus their efforts and collaborate in five priority areas:

1. Ensuring an inclusive and supportive school community with high expectations and rigorous, equitable, and personalized instruction for all students, including students with disabilities (SWDs) and English learners (ELs);
2. Developing a districtwide professional culture of highly effective teaching and leadership;
3. Creating the conditions to enable and apply evidence-informed decision-making;
4. Establishing systems and processes to cultivate and leverage family engagement and community partnerships; and
5. Organizing the district and reallocating resources to ensure high-quality management, accountability, systemwide coherence, and sustainability.

Each of these priorities has associated benchmarks that have been designed to help the district set priorities and measure progress. These benchmarks also serve as milestones that enable the community to hold the district responsible for timely progress and to celebrate successes along the way.

The five priority areas outlined here represent a significant departure from current practice. After more than 10 years of underperformance, we cannot expect dramatically different outcomes without dramatically different approaches. Students, families, and educators alike should expect the district and their involvement with it to be different.

What will be different?

- Clearer and higher expectations for academics and behavior of all students, as well as more systematic monitoring and supports for achieving these high standards
- Application of new approaches for reducing the opportunity and proficiency gaps between special populations (ELs, SWDs) and general education students
- Student-specific targeted interventions
- New instructional approaches
- Develop a cohesive curriculum and coordinated instructional practices to ensure an equitable education for all Southbridge students
- Revision of special education systems to ensure strong connections with general education teachers and programs and enhanced opportunities for student with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Increased attention to and shared ownership of students' social and emotional well-being and engagement
- New and strengthened wraparound services to support the health and emotional well-being of students and families
- New systemwide routines for collecting, managing, and using data
- New expectations for communicating with families
- New approaches for welcoming, educating, and engaging all stakeholders, particularly parents and family members

- Extended school day and/or school year in order to create more time for both student and educator learning
- New possibilities for grade configurations, pathways, and programs offered in each school
- Increased teaming and collaboration among educators
- Professional development, including mentoring, that is effective and strategically designed to build the capacity of educators and administrators so that they can be more empowered to effectively lead their schools
- Supervision and evaluation system for teachers and leaders that supports educators' growth and recognizes areas of expertise, and includes an expedited review process for those not demonstrating effectiveness and growth
- Differentiated roles that tap teachers' specific areas of expertise as assets for school and district improvement
- Reallocation of central-office services and resources, based on priorities
- Changes to collective bargaining agreements, for example, to ensure that the Receiver can hire, retain, and assign the most effective staff where their expertise is needed and to ensure that a new fair and transparent dispute resolution policy is in place and clearly articulated

These changes represent structural shifts as well as cultural shifts. Embracing them will not be easy at first, and is possible only if we do it together. Guided by a shared commitment to Southbridge students' right to a world-class education and with a shared sense of responsibility for bolstering the five priority areas that anchor this improvement system, we will be able to strive together, may occasionally falter together, learn together, and ultimately succeed together.

The approach taken in this Turnaround Plan focuses on developing coherence within and among schools so that together teachers and administrators establish a new baseline understanding of high-quality instructional approaches and curriculum expectations. As schools demonstrate the ability to provide a high-quality program of instruction that serves all students well, the turnaround will shift from primarily district-orchestrated decision making to greater school level empowerment and accountability.

This plan serves as the vehicle for initially creating a shared baseline of excellence and ultimately creates the conditions for school-level empowerment. The relatively small size of Southbridge is ideal for quickly establishing systemwide cohesion and for the Receiver to monitor each school's progress toward the ultimate goal of greater empowerment for all administrators and educators. In each school, changes such as enhanced professional development, differentiated roles for educators, extended time for student and teacher learning, improved routines for learning from student data, and ultimately improved student academic outcomes will be among the leading indicators of a shift to increased school-level autonomy.

We look forward to including the voices of students, educators, families, community, and all relevant stakeholders throughout the receivership to learn more about what is working well and what needs improvement in the schools.

Background and Vision

Background

In 2004 Southbridge was declared a Level 4 underperforming district by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and has remained one of the lowest achieving and least improving districts in the state. Over the last four years, Southbridge students have scored well below state averages in ELA, mathematics, and science on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests, both overall and for the students identified as high-needs. Student Growth Percentiles were 34 in ELA and 30 in mathematics (the state average is 50) and the Composite Performance Indices (CPIs), already 26 and 28.4 percentage points below the state average respectively, fell by 1.3 percent in ELA and 1.4 percent in mathematics over the last 4 years. Of particular concern, only 4 percent of students with disabilities (SWDs) and 9 percent of English learners (ELs) across the district scored advance or proficient on MCAS in 2015 (compared to 22 percent and 36 percent statewide, respectively).³

During the 2014-2015 school year, Southbridge's out-of-school suspension and in-school suspension rates for all students in the district were almost three times the state rate. The four-year cohort graduation rate for all students was more than 23 percentage points lower than the state rate and the five-year graduation rate more than 15 percentage points lower. Similarly, the dropout rate was twice the state rate in 2013-2014 at 4.4 percent (8.5 percent for SWDs).⁴

Leadership and governance in the Southbridge Public Schools is also a major area of concern. Since 2010, the district has had 7 superintendents, 7 high school principals, and 43 individuals in the 9 top school and district leadership positions. As noted in the October 2015 District Review Report, "Inconsistent leadership is at the root of major gaps in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the district and has contributed most directly to the persistently low and declining level of achievement that mark the district." In addition, the school committee has not adhered to its appropriate roles and responsibilities. For example, the District Review Report indicated that the school committee had involved itself in school operations in order to advance personal interest and some interviewees told the review team that the school committee had exerted its influence into personnel matters of the district and misappropriated district funds.⁵ Additionally, the fiscal year 2016 budget process was characterized by ineffective communication and little collaboration between the school committee and town officials. The District Review concluded that, because of dysfunctional governance and the district's inability to secure and sustain consistent leadership at any level, there has been widespread fragility of a number of key systems and practices necessary to support district turnaround.

In January 2016, following the release of the Southbridge District Review Report, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to accept the strong recommendation of the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that the Southbridge Public Schools be named a "chronically underperforming" (Level 5) district. This recommendation was made after over a decade of persistently low student performance.

³ DRR pp. 89, 90, 92

⁴ DRR pp. 13, 93

⁵ DRR pp.3

Committed to making substantial improvements to the educational experience of every student in Southbridge, on March 22, 2016, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Mitchell Chester, appointed Dr. Jessica Huizenga as the Receiver for the Southbridge Public Schools, effective May 2, 2016. Dr. Huizenga participated in the creation of the district's turnaround plan and served as receiver for the 2016-2017 school year. On May 30, 2017, Dr. Russell Johnston was appointed interim receiver for the district.

Vision into Action

After reviewing the District Review Report, studying the Local Stakeholder Group recommendations, spending time in the district, and speaking with faculty, families, and students, a new vision for the Southbridge Public Schools was crafted:

In the Southbridge Public Schools, ALL students will experience a world-class education, and will graduate as engaged citizens who demonstrate the essential skills required for success in college and career.

To turn this vision into a strategic and actionable plan, the receiver drew upon a variety of research-based resources and guidance about best practices. A meta-analysis of district-reform models and leadership frameworks informed the definition of five critical priority areas. One key source was *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*, a document based on a detailed analysis of the experience of the initial 34 Level 4 schools during the first three years of turnaround (2010–2011 to 2012–2013).⁶ This guide presents key turnaround practices to be considered by state leaders, districts, schools, and policymakers striving to improve and sustain ongoing and future turnaround efforts. Further, state standards and guidance were tapped as resources, including the [Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development](#) and the [Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals](#).

It is essential for Southbridge students to experience an integrated educational experience as they move between grade levels so an initial emphasis will also be placed on greater alignment of curriculum and assessment. To achieve such goals, administrators and educators will have to tightly align their efforts across the district to create a new unified body of knowledge about teaching and learning. Ultimately, as these shared understandings of excellence become the norm, administrators and educators will become more empowered to make decisions at the school level that propel learning to even greater heights.

The approach taken in this Turnaround Plan focuses on developing coherence within and among schools so that together teachers and administrators establish a new baseline understanding of high-quality instructional approaches and curriculum expectations. As schools demonstrate the ability to provide a high-quality program of instruction that serves all students well, the turnaround will shift from primarily district-orchestrated decision making to greater school level empowerment and accountability.

This Plan serves as the vehicle for initially creating a shared baseline of excellence and ultimately creates the conditions for school level empowerment. The relatively small size of Southbridge is ideal for quickly

6 Lane, B., Unger, C., and Souvanna, P. (2014). *Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis*. Baltimore, MD: Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning. See [Turnaround Practices in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis](#).

establishing systemwide cohesion and for the Receiver to monitor each school's progress toward the ultimate goal of greater empowerment for all administrators and educators. In each school, changes such as enhanced professional development, differentiated roles for educators, extended time for student and teacher learning, improved routines for learning from student data, and ultimately improved student academic outcomes will be among the leading indicators for a shift to increased school-level autonomy.

Statutory Basis for the Implementation of the Turnaround Plan

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, §1K, the Commissioner and the Receiver must create a Turnaround Plan intended to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in the district. The Commissioner and the Receiver will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the Turnaround Plan. Among other things, through the Turnaround Plan, the Commissioner and the Receiver may expand, alter, or replace the curriculum and program offerings of the district; reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the district; provide funds to increase the salary of an administrator or teacher working in an underperforming school in order to attract or retain highly qualified administrators or teachers, or to reward administrators or teachers who work in chronically underperforming districts that have achieved the annual goals in the Turnaround Plan; expand the school day or school year or both of schools in the district; limit, suspend, or change one or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement in the district; add pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten classes; following consultation with applicable local unions, require the principal and all administrators, teachers, and staff to reapply for their positions; limit, suspend, or change one or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices relate to the underperforming schools in the district; provide job-embedded professional development for teachers in the district; provide increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction; establish a plan for professional development for administrators in the district; develop a strategy to search for and study best practices in areas of demonstrated deficiency in the district; establish strategies to address mobility and transiency among the student population of the district; and establish steps to assure a continuum of high-expertise teachers by aligning the following processes with the common core of professional knowledge and skill: hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture, and organizational structure.

The terms outlined in Appendix A are necessary to the successful implementation of the Turnaround Plan and reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, and working rules and to any practices or policies pursuant to the collective bargaining agreements. These terms will take effect as of July 1, 2016, and must be included in any future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver will provide a summary of these changes to each union leader by approximately August 15, 2016. The Commissioner and the Receiver reserve the right to make additional changes to collective bargaining agreements as needed. Nothing contained in the Turnaround Plan or the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as they are provided for under G.L. c. 69, §1K.

The Turnaround Plan is authorized for a period of three years. The Commissioner and the Receiver may develop additional components of the Plan or amend the Plan, as appropriate. The district will exit from receivership once gains are sufficient and positive change has been institutionalized to ensure continued growth and sustainable results.

Priority Area 1: Ensuring an inclusive and supportive school community with high expectations and rigorous, equitable, and personalized instruction for all students, including students with disabilities and English learners

Challenges: The district review team found that teachers implemented lessons that were accessible for all learners in just 10 percent of observed lessons overall. In observed classrooms, there was little evidence of a positive classroom climate, characterized by respectful behaviors, routines, tone, and discourse. At the middle and high school, observers from the district review team saw only a small number of classes characterized by rigorous instructional practices and well-structured lessons that are essential for productive teaching and learning. Additionally, observers saw limited examples of students taking responsibility for their learning or being purposefully engaged in tasks that promote critical thinking.⁷

The proportion of students absent 10 or more days per year has increased from 45.2 percent in 2010 to 49.7 percent in 2015 (compared to the state rate of 32.9 percent). The district's rate of chronic absence, defined as students absent 10 or more percent of their time in school, has also increased, from 24.0 percent in 2010 to 29.0 percent in 2015 (compared to the state rate of 12.9 percent). These data are particularly concerning because students cannot effectively engage in the educational process if they are chronically absent.⁸

Especially at the secondary level, little or no work has been done to document and align curriculum between grades and with state frameworks, and districtwide, in observed lessons, classroom instruction was not consistently differentiated to account for differences in the learning needs of all students.

Pedagogical practices were not appropriately geared toward the district's growing English learners (ELs) (now 383 students or 17 percent) or students with disabilities (SWDs). The dropout rate for SWDs doubled between 2011 and 2014.⁹ There is only one English language development (ELD) teacher position for all ELs in the middle-school grades, and the one ELD teacher position at the high-school level is currently vacant. Districtwide, there was no EL director for the 383 ELs until the Receiver hired someone for that position. Also, 30 teachers, or approximately 18 percent of the entire staff, have not earned the required Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) endorsement.

Rationale: In order to reduce chronic absence and achieve rapid academic improvement for all students in Southbridge, every classroom in the district needs both a physically and emotionally safe climate that promotes learning, achievement, and self-efficacy. Significant attention will need to be paid to aligning curriculum and focusing on high-quality instruction and assessment, and this must be backed up by tiered systems of support to address the wide range of needs within the student population. Moreover, specific attention must be focused on strengthening instruction and support for ELs and SWDs.

Strategy A: Implement a high-quality, vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment system.¹⁰

7 DRR pp. 38-39

8 DRR pp. 67

9 DRR pp. 97

10 This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 1 (1,2,3); 10 (1)

High-performing districts have an instructional framework. This means rigorous, high-quality standards-based curricula are taught through high-impact, developmentally appropriate instructional practices and student achievement is monitored and guided by evidence of learning derived from a balanced assessment system.

1. **Establish a Standards-Based Curriculum:** The district will articulate a high-quality standards-based curriculum sequence for all subjects that clearly defines what students should know and be able to do in each grade. It must be vertically aligned across all grades and horizontally aligned across programs. It will be aligned with World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards as well as the Massachusetts curriculum framework. In addition, the district will ensure that educators have curricular resources to deliver engaging instruction that effectively supports all students to acquire literacy and quantitative reasoning knowledge and skills across the curriculum as outlined in the Massachusetts framework.
2. **Create a Balanced Assessment System:** The district will develop a balanced assessment system that includes universal screening and diagnostic assessments that will identify students who are at risk for learning challenges and then link students' needs to tiered systems of support so that educators can monitor equity of opportunity and high expectations across the district. The district will develop and/or identify curriculum-aligned formative assessments so that schools can monitor individual and subgroup progress on curriculum standards; collaboratively review and analyze student data and student work to identify student learning gaps, priorities, and specific learning targets; and ensure timely and appropriate interventions through grade-level data teams and Building-Based Support Teams. Assessments needed for special education purposes will be informed by these identified assessments when determining whether the student's ability to make effective educational progress is impaired.
3. **Focus on High-Impact Instructional Practices:** The district will identify high-impact instructional practices and routines that will be supported systemwide. By working collectively to strengthen a few high-impact instructional practices at a time, educators will be better able to support one another toward mastery. These practices will support high-quality implementation of the standards-based curriculum and will be informed by data-informed analyses of student-specific needs arising from the balanced assessment system.

Strategy B: Ensure the conditions that support high-quality implementation of instructional practices.¹¹

The instructional framework described in Strategy A cannot stand alone in schools. Educators must be able to make instructional decisions that will promote the success of the unique set of learners in each class.

1. **Set and Uphold High Expectations for All:** The district will develop a shared understanding across all schools of rigor and high expectations for academics and behavior. These high expectations will prepare students to develop 21st century skills¹², including critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration.

¹¹ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 2 (7).

¹² See: <http://www.p21.org/about-us/p21-framework>

2. **Promote Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching that will assist teachers in instructing English learners:** The district will provide support as teachers select and use instructional materials, tools, and assessments that are aligned to the needs of a linguistically and culturally diverse student population. In addition, the district will support teachers to strengthen relationship-building and to implement culturally responsive pedagogical practices.
3. **Foster a Positive Learning Environment:** The district will support schools to foster a positive learning environment predicated on a growth mindset and student reflection.

Strategy C: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of ELs throughout the district.¹³

In order for the new instructional guidance system to best meet the needs of Southbridge's many ELs, deliberate attention will be paid to incorporating recommendations from research and best practice about language development.

1. **Develop an Explicit, Systematic, and Standards-Aligned Language Development Program:** The district will develop a strong, systematic program aligned to WIDA and the Massachusetts curriculum framework for ELs in all grades. To this end, it will create protocols for proper systematic identification and testing of potential ELs, and tools for monitoring the services that individual ELs are receiving. It will identify or develop an English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum based on ESL model curriculum units, and ESL model-curriculum-unit trainings, as well as aligned English language development formative assessments to monitor the growth of students' language development in ways that can inform instruction. (See also Priority Area 1, Strategy A.)
2. **Strengthen Implementation of Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teaching Strategies:** The district will provide support and accountability for all educators of ELs to effectively implement SEI instructional strategies. All core academic teachers and the administrators who supervise or evaluate them will be supported to earn the SEI Endorsement, and those core Sheltered Content Instruction (SCI) teachers who have already earned the endorsement will be supported with "extending the learning" professional development. Non-core educators will also complete professional development designed to help them meet the needs of ELs and former English learners. (See also Priority Area 2.)
3. **Provide Student-Specific Supports:** The district will support educators to use multiple sources of data, such as Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS) results and other formative and summative assessments, to create action plans to make strategic and student-specific instructional decisions in support of ELs' success. For educators to do this, the district must provide timely access to language development data, including ACCESS, MCAS, and other relevant data; support educators in developing formative assessments that can identify specific student learning gaps and strengths and inform instruction; and aid educators in leveraging Massachusetts framework-aligned curriculum, WIDA resources, and SEI trainings to address students' learning gaps.
4. **Create Alternative Program Options for ELs:** The district will investigate alternative program options that can maximize students' strengths as they build their literacy in English and their native language. Some options may be available for all students, for example, a dual-language program to achieve high levels of language proficiency and literacy in both English and Spanish for native-English speakers and native-Spanish-speakers alike (also referred to as biliteracy). In addition, the district will explore options to address particular needs: for example, a newcomers program to strengthen the foundational skills of students new to the country and a program to meet the needs of ELs with limited consistency in their

¹³ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 5(1,3, 5,7)

education (Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)/Students with Limited and Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)). The district will also explore establishing pathways within existing programs, for example, rapid English language acquisition and academic growth options in both Sheltered Content and English as a Second Language classrooms so that ELs can gain higher levels of English language proficiency throughout their academic experiences.

Strategy D: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of SWDs throughout the district.¹⁴

Southbridge offers a range of programs and services to students with a wide range of disabilities. This Plan offers an opportunity to review these programs, align them with the rest of the Plan, and make decisions that will ensure that they are efficiently and effectively meeting students' needs.

1. **Conduct a Review of Current Programming:** The district will assess existing special education programs to determine the current offerings and populations served. The review will describe current services and programming and summarize any available evidence of effectiveness. The review will provide comprehensive recommendations to improve services and programming.
2. **Provide Comprehensive Services:** The district will provide comprehensive special education services that meet students' needs. This may include the provision of new placement options with clear and culturally competent entry and exit criteria and/or opportunities for students to access inclusive settings with quality instruction and appropriate physical space.
3. **Ensure Systematic Program Monitoring:** The district will establish tracking and analysis procedures that enable educators to review and monitor the effectiveness of proposed changes, such as the new entry and exit criteria. The program will be monitored for effectiveness in the aggregate and by subgroup.

Strategy E: Explore a range of rigorous learning options for students through differentiated pathways.¹⁵

Not all students learn the same way. Southbridge is committed to expanding the pathways available for students' success.

1. **Envision New Academic Options:** The district will investigate new academic options for students that offer differentiated pathways to academic success, such as a dual-language program for elementary students or alternative English learners' programs, as permitted by G.L. c. 69, § 1K(c)(5), establish Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for middle- and high-school students, and provide workforce-development programs for high-school students. To engage the community in developing a proposal for the high school, the district will convene a Secondary Education Redesign Working Group to explore varied academic and technical pathways. The district will also explore partnerships as resources, for example, to provide options for early college programs. (See also Priority Area 5, Strategy A.)
2. **Expect to Graduate All Students:** The district will re-engage students, including SWDs and ELs, who may be at-risk, over-aged, or under-credited, by establishing credit-recovery options for those who have left the district and those at risk of leaving. In addition, the district will develop an early-warning indicator system to proactively identify and intervene with students who may be getting off-track for on-time graduation.
3. **Expand Time on Learning:** The district will create expanded learning options by extending the school day/school year and/or providing programming beyond it. The district will identify resources and

¹⁴ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 3(4,5,7)

¹⁵ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 1 (5), 9 (2)

partnerships for establishing supplemental learning opportunities, such as vacation academies and expanded summer programs. (See also Priority Area 5 and Appendix A.)

Strategy F: Build all students’ social and emotional learning (SEL) skills in order to promote wellness and positive school engagement.¹⁶

Social and emotional well-being affects students’ abilities to learn, collaborate, and communicate effectively. By dedicating deliberate attention to this arena, we will support students to engage in ways that not only promote enjoyment of learning but also lead to academic success and college and career readiness.

1. **Foster a Healthy Learning Environment:** The district will foster the development of a safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environment in every school. It will, for example, develop list of districtwide developmental behavior expectations, clarify expectations for classroom positive behavior management and disciplinary approaches, and expand nutrition programs that support student learning, such as breakfast in the classroom. Particular attention will be paid to the impact of poverty on learning and the need for appropriately responsive practices for students coming from impoverished environments.
2. **Build Capacity for Supporting Social and Emotional Learning:** The district will develop/ identify SEL curricular resources and provide professional learning experiences for all faculty to strengthen their skills for managing SEL development and issues, e.g., Responsive Classroom. The district will also add resources and staffing to support SEL development and crisis intervention, including but not limited to resources secured through partnerships that can help provide wraparound services.
3. **Provide Extracurricular Opportunities:** The district will review current offerings and recommend the expansion of options for extracurricular enrichment beyond the school day without additional cost to families as a means of strengthening connections and interest in learning. (See also Priority Area 4, Strategy C.)
4. **Establish a Network of Wraparound Services:** The district will identify internal (school district) and external resources (including community partners and town services of Southbridge) to ensure that students with needs beyond Tier 3 interventions (academic, emotional, behavioral, and medical) receive the services they need.

Implementation Benchmarks

Strategy 1-A: Implement a high-quality, aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment system. Standards-Based Curriculum Balanced Assessment System High-Impact Instructional Practices	I. By summer 2017, the district will have outlined units of study in math and ELA. II. By spring 2017, the district will complete an inventory of its assessments and will determine which ones will continue to be used and which additional assessments need to be developed or procured.
Strategy 1-B:	I. By fall 2016, identify and communicate two high-

¹⁶ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 2 (6), 6 (4)

<p>Ensure the conditions that support high-quality implementation of instructional practices. High Expectations for All Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Teaching Positive Learning Environment</p>	<p>impact, instructional practices and routines that will be supported systemwide.</p> <p>II. By winter 2016, using a framework provided by the district, each principal will outline essential actions that will take place during school year 2016–2017 to increase teachers’ capacity to provide high-quality core instruction and tiered supports (e.g., PD, structures and culture).</p>
<p>Strategy 1-C: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of ELs throughout the district. Explicit, Systematic, Standards-Aligned Language Development Program Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teaching Strategies Student-Specific Supports Alternative Program Options for ELs</p>	<p>I. By fall 2016, the district will have a plan to ensure that core academic teachers and the administrators who supervise or evaluate them will earn the SEI endorsement by June 30, 2017.</p> <p>II. By spring 2017, the district will develop a plan for non-core educators to complete professional development designed to help them meet the needs of ELs and former English learners.</p> <p>III. By spring 2017, the district will have completed a review of current services for ELs and develop a plan to maximize availability of quality services for gaining higher levels of English language proficiency throughout students’ academic program.</p> <p>IV. By spring 2017, the district will convene a committee to explore alternative program options for ELs, and identify a strategy and timeline for implementing at least one new program model beginning in school year 2017–2018.</p>
<p>Strategy 1-D: Develop and implement comprehensive strategies to address the needs of SWDs throughout the district Review Current Programming Comprehensive Services Program Monitoring</p>	<p>I. By winter 2016, the district will review its special education program identifying best practices, inconsistencies, and gaps in services for SWDs in the district.</p> <p>II. By summer 2017, the district will have analyzed the findings and recommendations in the review and will have developed a plan for implementing the essential elements in subsequent school years.</p>
<p>Strategy 1-E: Explore a range of rigorous learning options for students through differentiated pathways New Academic Options Graduation Paths for All Students Expanded Time on Learning</p>	<p>I. By winter 2016, the district will convene a Secondary Redesign Working Group, which will make recommendations that include new academic and/or technical pathways for community input. (To be launched for the 2018-2019 school year.)</p> <p>II. By winter 2016, the district will hold initial meetings with local higher education institutions about the establishment of early college programming.</p> <p>III. By spring 2017, the district will have implemented at least one extended learning option.</p>
<p>Strategy 1-F: Build all students’ social and emotional skills in order to promote wellness</p>	<p>I. By fall 2016, the district will have identified student, staff, and parent survey tools to be implemented by April 2017 to measure and improve the instructional and social and emotional climate in each school. The district will also articulate a process for collecting,</p>

<p>and positive school engagement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Healthy Learning Environment 2. Capacity-Building for Supporting Social and Emotional Learning 3. Extracurricular Opportunities 4. Network of Wraparound Services 	<p>analyzing, and using those data to inform school- and districtwide improvement efforts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> II. By summer 2017, the district will review and assess the effectiveness of its current district- and school-based approaches to disciplining students, including programs, protocols, structures, and facilities currently used in those processes (e.g., positive behavioral expectations, student support rooms, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and alternatives to suspension). III. By summer 2017, based on climate data collected during school year 2016–2017, each school will incorporate strategies and professional development to create a safer, healthier, and more welcoming learning environment.
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Priority Area 2: Developing a Districtwide Professional Culture of Highly Effective Teaching and Leadership

Challenges: Educators in the Southbridge Public Schools display a lack of professionalism and little evidence of shared responsibility. The School Quality Review (SQR) conducted by School Works, LLC, in 2015 reported “high levels of disrespect” between students and teachers across the district,¹⁷ which it attributed, in part, to the lack of supervision as a result of excessive turnover in district leadership. The district review found that insufficient leadership in grades 6-12 exacerbated the situation such that teachers in those grades were not provided with frequent, formative feedback.¹⁸

The current mentoring program for new teachers is inadequate, prompting one teacher to say, “We keep losing teachers and mentoring could be the difference maker in keeping teachers. [New] people feel they are left on an island.”¹⁹ Not surprisingly there has been a constant turnover of the teaching staff, and formal professional development for teachers, many of whom are new each year, does not have clearly articulated goals that are aligned with district needs and improvement priorities.

Overall, the Southbridge educator evaluation system has not been used effectively to promote the growth and development of all educators, to place student learning at the center, to recognize excellence in teaching and leading, and to set a high bar for professional teaching status. Even though the district has been effectively implementing some elements of the Massachusetts' Educator Evaluation Framework, its subsequent efforts to implement important components related to the collection and use of multiple sources of evaluative evidence have badly faltered. The full implementation of a system aligned to the state Educator Evaluation Framework requires (a) the collection and use of student and staff feedback for teachers and administrators and (b) the identification of District-Determined Measures (DDMs) to assess and subsequently to be used to determine educator Student Impact Ratings. The district has done little to address either of these initiatives and was out of compliance with both of these requirements at the time of the review.²⁰ Of note, because of the recent history of high turnover both of school and district leaders, administrator personnel folders were often incomplete.²¹

17 SchoolWorks, LLC (April 13-15, 2015). Southbridge Middle/High School - School Quality Review. See also: [http://www.southbridge.k12.ma.us/modules/groups/homepagefiles/cms/474046/File/Spring%202015%20Southbridge%20SQR%20Report%20--%20Final\(1\).pdf](http://www.southbridge.k12.ma.us/modules/groups/homepagefiles/cms/474046/File/Spring%202015%20Southbridge%20SQR%20Report%20--%20Final(1).pdf) This report was commissioned by the district and partially funded by ESE.

18 DRR pp. 55, 58

19 DRR pp. 58

20 DRR pp. 55

21 DRR pp. 56

The conditions described above have compromised the district's ability to retain educators, improve classroom instruction, and ultimately to meet students' needs for educational opportunities and achievement.

Rationale: It is essential that a professional culture that includes high expectations be infused at every level of the system ---at the classroom, school, and district levels. Effective leadership will be essential to this work. Leadership, however, must be shared and aimed at building collective responsibility for student outcomes. Achieving this cultural shift will help to recruit and retain effective educators. Strengthening induction, mentoring, and ongoing professional development will also improve the district's capacity to develop a competent and stable workforce of educators who are committed to high achievement and continuous improvement. In order to attract and retain the highest quality staff and secure a professional culture, it will be essential to revamp the compensation system to ensure that individual effectiveness, professional growth, contribution to school and district improvement efforts, and student academic growth are key factors. (See also Priority Area 5, Strategy C.)

Strategy A: Transform the district's culture into one of high standards and positive regard for all students and staff.²²

The dramatic improvements called for in this Plan require significant changes, and there will be challenges along the way. The community will benefit from a culture that remains laser-focused on what is most important: high standards and positive regard for all students and staff.

1. **Promote Academic, Social, Emotional, and Cultural Competence:** The district will support students and staff to develop competence in multiple areas, including academic, social, emotional, and cultural. It will set high standards for students and staff and cultivate a professional/academic culture of internal accountability to those standards. High standards for attendance and engagement will also be enforced.
2. **Establish Student-Focused Teams:** The district will connect the work of new and existing teams to student outcomes. Teams will focus on student growth and achievement and will review current student placement, tracking, and retention policies. (See also Priority Area 1, Strategies D and C.)
3. **Recognize Educators' Professional Expertise:** The district will recognize excellence in teaching and leading, and it will validate specific areas of expertise educators demonstrate by providing opportunities for differentiated roles that leverage recognized expertise in both formal and informal ways at the school and district levels. In addition, the district will revamp its compensation approach in ways that recognize the value of educators' knowledge and skills. (See also Appendix A, III.)

²² This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 9

Strategy B: Cultivate Shared Leadership, Collective Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration.²³

This hard work requires an “all hands on deck” approach. This plan can best maximize the skills that all stakeholders have to offer if it pays deliberate attention to the structure and skills required for effective teaming and collaboration.

1. **Agree upon Core Values:** The district will identify shared core values that will form a solid foundation for cultural improvement and a touchstone for decision-making.
2. **Cultivate Teaming:** The district will support the establishment and/or ongoing improvement of teams designed to recognize role-based expertise and ensure authentic engagement in decision-making. To ensure teacher voice, teams will be formed at many levels including: grade-level, department, school-site instructional leadership teams, Superintendent’s Roundtable, and teacher and community councils. (See also Appendix A, III and IV.)
3. **Support Capacity-Building for Collaboration:** The district will provide leadership training to support team members to effectively collaborate, communicate, and align their improvement efforts.

Strategy C: Attract and retain highly qualified, diverse teachers and leaders.²⁴

The most significant school-based factor in students’ learning is the quality of the teaching they receive. Southbridge is committed to attracting and retaining a caring, qualified, and highly competent workforce of teachers and leaders.

1. **Improve Recruitment:** The district will partner with regional teacher preparation programs to grow their own highly qualified, diverse workforce. In particular, the district will work with partner organizations to recruit and prepare current paraprofessionals and Southbridge residents to become SPS teachers, and provide pathways for talented SPS teachers to become leaders.
2. **Strengthen Induction:** The district will strengthen induction programs for teachers and leaders and ensure that they receive multi-year support. These programs may include the support of carefully selected, matched, trained mentors, a cohort model, or other individualized or differentiated supports.
3. **Provide Differentiated Roles:** The district will provide opportunities for differentiated professional experiences, supported with relevant leadership development training. Roles may include, for example: professional learning leader, team leader, mentor opportunities (for student teachers, novice teachers, or veteran teachers in need of improvement), or peer assistants within a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program.

Strategy D: Ensure ongoing growth of teachers and leaders.²⁵

1. **Provide Powerful Professional Development for All:** The district will provide effective professional learning for all staff. Professional development opportunities for professional staff will be designed and supported to meet the *Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development*.²⁶ (See also Priority Area 5, Strategy A and Appendix A, IV.)

²³ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 4 (15), 7(8)

²⁴ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 4 (1,3,12,13,15)

²⁵ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 7 (all)

²⁶ See Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.htm>

2. **Establish and Address Learning Priorities for Teachers:** The district will establish a coherent plan for professional development priorities for all teachers.
3. **Establish and Address Learning Priorities for Leaders:** The district will provide professional development in instructional leadership for school and district leaders/administrators.

Strategy E: Supervise and evaluate district employees through a process that balances support for continuous improvement with accountability.²⁷

Students are not the only ones learning in SPS. All educators---teachers and leaders---will have individual professional development plans with accountability for meeting targets and growth-oriented support for reaching them.

1. **Improve the Educator Evaluation System:** Educators and administrators will be evaluated according to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework, as adapted by the Receiver. The Receiver will develop and implement evaluation processes for all other district personnel. Technology tools will be a resource in this new system to ensure timely and clear communication and access to information. The district will communicate the new process to relevant stakeholders, and support them to ensure they are aware of important distinctions between the process to which they are accustomed and this new process. (See also Appendix A, V.)
2. **Provide Individualized Support:** The district will provide staff with professional learning support that addresses their individualized learning goals, ensuring that teachers receive actionable feedback for improvement and coaching for continuous improvement. They will also have access to individualized learning resources, including web-based tools and services, higher education-based programs, and other resources.

Implementation Benchmarks

<p>Strategy 2-A: Transform the district's culture into one of high standards and positive regard for all students and staff Academic, Social, Emotional, and Cultural Competence Student-Focused Teams Recognizing Educators' Professional Expertise</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. By spring 2017, the district will establish accurate and efficient record-keeping protocols, accountability routines, and intervention supports related to attendance and punctuality of both students and staff. II. By spring 2016, the district will begin implementation of routines that recognize, celebrate, and leverage the strengths and accomplishments of students and staff.
<p>Strategy 2-B: Cultivate shared leadership, collective responsibility, and professional collaboration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. By fall 2016, the district will establish a Superintendent's Roundtable (composed of district and school leaders, teachers, partners, and high school students) charged with identifying shared core values to be the foundation for cultural improvement, monitoring the benchmarks of the Turnaround Plan, and making recommendations

²⁷ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 4 (2,5)

Core Values Teaming Capacity Building for Collaboration	to support its success. II. By spring 2017, the district will hold the first cross-school convening of school Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) to begin the process of cross-team learning, establishing systemwide practices, and identifying supports needed for success.
Strategy 2-C: Attract and retain highly qualified, diverse teachers & leaders Recruitment Induction Differentiated Roles	I. By spring 2017, the district will announce the details of an improved induction and mentoring program, in conjunction with recruitment efforts for school year 2017–2018. II. By spring 2017, the district will have convened an initial meeting with potential higher education partners about creating a teacher preparation pipeline for Southbridge. III. By spring 2017, the Superintendent’s Roundtable will make some initial recommendations about opportunities for teachers with identified areas of expertise to assume differentiated professional roles.
Strategy 2-D: Ensure ongoing growth of teachers and leaders Powerful Professional Development for All Learning Priorities for Teachers Learning Priorities for Leaders	I. By spring 2017, the district will establish a plan for all available professional learning opportunities to be listed, managed, and evaluated online as part of the comprehensive information system. II. By winter 2016, the district will have a plan for ensuring that all school and district leaders have received professional learning support for establishing safe and supportive schools.
Strategy 2-E: Supervise and evaluate district employees through a process that balances support for continuous improvement with accountability Supervision and Evaluation System Individualized Support	I. By summer 2016, the district will implement the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework, as adapted by the Receiver, and will distribute clear communication about the adapted educator evaluation system to all relevant stakeholders. II. By winter 2017, information about available professional learning opportunities will be linked to MA Educator Evaluation Standards so that teachers can better identify opportunities that meet their specific needs.

Priority Area 3: Create the Conditions to Enable and Apply Evidence-Informed Decision-making.

Challenges: The technology infrastructure is currently inconsistent across schools and does not support improved instruction, communication, assessment, and data collection. There is little coherent data other than MCAS results for groups of teachers to collect and analyze. The middle and high schools have not developed an effective and coordinated approach to assessment. Further, there is inadequate time and expertise to systematically collect, analyze, and use what limited assessment data there is to improve teaching and learning. Administrators acknowledged that there is very little use of data to identify professional development (PD) goals or professional learning objectives.²⁸

The Receiver found inconsistent reporting of teacher absence from school to school.

Rationale: A comprehensive information management system is needed to provide consistent, accurate data to all stakeholder groups. Once such a system is established, providing time and support for educators and parents to learn how to access and use the system will be key. Equally essential will be providing common planning time and establishing effective routines and protocols to analyze and mine the data so that assessments can illuminate ways to improve instruction, monitor progress, and make key decisions about program adoption, staffing, and instruction. The ultimate goal of this priority area is to create the conditions for success by fostering a districtwide data-literate culture and engaging in consistent practices for data-driven decision-making.

Strategy A: Improve and integrate information collection and management systems.²⁹

Evidence-informed decision-making requires an efficient, feasible, and user-friendly system for collecting, managing, and retrieving multiple forms of evidence and information.

1. **Conduct an audit of existing data systems and technology assets and limitations:** The district will create an inventory of existing data sources and systems and assess existing technology resources (hardware, software, trained personnel, and service contracts) in each school and at the district level, to make recommendations in consultation with educators for a comprehensive information management system.
2. **Establish a comprehensive information management system:** The district will ensure that all stakeholders are able to access the evidence needed to make informed decisions. The system will make data available in a timely, easily accessible way that produces cross-data analyses and easy-to-interpret displays. Students, teachers, leaders and families will have access to student data on achievement, attendance, and behavior.

Strategy B: Provide system-level supports for efficient and effective data use processes.³⁰

The comprehensive information management system proposed will make data and information available. In order for stakeholders to successfully adopt new routines for using this complex technology tool to make stronger decisions about teaching and learning, they will need to believe that it is worth the

²⁸ DRR pp. 58

²⁹ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 10 (1,2)

³⁰ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 1 (1,2,3), 7 (7,14)

effort to receive training to learn how to use it well, to be supported by protocols for facilitating and monitoring success, and to have sufficient time to engage in data use.

1. **Enable faculty, parents, and students to access the system:** The district will ensure that stakeholders have access to the specific data and information they need for their particular role.
2. **Provide Professional Development (PD) to support educators in developing effective routines for use:** The district will strengthen educators' knowledge and skills to engage in effective and efficient data use routines.
3. **Develop routines and protocols that help ensure quality and monitor progress:** The district will provide tools to support high quality data use routines, such as implementation rubrics, data team guides, and meeting protocols.
4. **Build in time for educators' effective information management and use:** The district will see to it that educators have sufficient time to collect and enter information, retrieve and use information, and engage in collaborative planning with others using data. (See also Priority Area 5, Strategy A.)

Strategy C: Ensure data are being used to inform high-leverage decisions.³¹

Our comprehensive information management system can be used in many ways. To respond to the urgent need for accelerated improvement, the district will support educators to focus their data skills initially on improving the quality of four types of high-leverage decisions.

1. **Use data to make programming decisions:** The school and district leaders will model effective use of evidence-informed decision-making as determinations are made about curriculum, the addition or termination of programs, student placement, and time on learning. They will support all educators to do so as well. (See also Priority Area 1.)
2. **Use data to make staffing decisions:** School and district leaders will model effective evidence-informed decision-making about who is teaching what and to whom. This includes decisions at the district level about hiring and placement of teachers, as well course assignment and intervention grouping at the school level. (See also Priority Area 2.) In addition, school and district leaders will monitor the equity of access to highly-qualified teachers and special programs for critical student populations, including:
 - ELs
 - SWDs
 - Students living with trauma
3. **Use data to make instructional decisions:** The district will conduct an audit of instructional materials and other resource allocations together with data to make strategic decisions about reallocations or new acquisitions that have the best chances of strengthening the quality of teaching. In addition, the district will develop/refine instructional implementation rubrics that can help communicate and monitor the quality of implementation of key instructional practices. At the school level, educators will be supported to make evidence-informed instructional decisions (See also Priority Area 3, Strategy B.)
4. **Use data to monitor student results and support:** The district will create dashboards that enable school and district leaders to monitor the progress of all students and key subgroups on critical benchmarks. The district will also support school instructional leadership teams to maintain and respond to the data by collaboratively investigating what strategies seem to be working for which students, and which teachers need to try a new intervention strategy. (See also Priority Area 1.)

³¹ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 7 (1,4), 10(1,2)

Implementation Benchmarks

<p>Strategy 3-A: Improve and integrate information collection and management systems Conduct an audit of existing data systems and technology assets and limitations Establish a comprehensive information management system</p>	<p>I. By spring 2017, the district will conduct a comprehensive audit of existing data systems that will identify clear strengths of current assets. The district will also articulate a vision of the comprehensive information system it needs and specific recommendations for addressing challenges and gaps.</p>
<p>Strategy 3-B: Provide system-level supports for efficient and effective data use processes Ensure that faculty, parents and students are able and inclined to access the system Provide Professional Development (PD) to support educators in developing effective routines for use Develop routines and protocols that help ensure quality and monitor progress Ensure educators have sufficient time for effective information management and use</p>	<p>I. By spring 2017, districtwide common assessments will have been identified in math. II. By summer 2017, the district will ensure that all staff know how to access data from the new comprehensive information management system and have time within their work schedules for managing and using the data. III. By fall 2017, the district will be prepared to implement a plan that uses multiple pathways to educate students and families about how to access and use the comprehensive information system.</p>
<p>Strategy 3-C: Ensure that data are being used to inform high-leverage decisions Use data to make programming decisions Use data to make staffing decisions Use data to make instructional decisions Use data to monitor student results and support</p>	<p>I. By winter 2016, the district will model data-informed decision-making by communicating key decisions about curriculum, programs, or time on learning together with the student data that informed each decision. II. By spring 2017, the district will have completed an audit of instructional materials and resource allocations, and the district will have developed and piloted an instructional implementation rubric. The data will be collected in such a way that makes it accessible from (and used for analysis within) the comprehensive information system. III. By winter 2016 all school Instructional Leadership Teams and the Superintendent's Roundtable will begin a quarterly routine of monitoring the progress made by key subgroups on critical benchmarks and ensuring that responses are implemented where needed.</p>

Priority Area 4: Establish Systems and Processes to Cultivate and Leverage Family and Community Partnerships

Challenges: The Local Stakeholder Group noted that the district has not put resources in place to provide adequate communication between key district staff and newly arrived ELs and their families, the vast majority of whom speak Spanish, and it identified the need for a wraparound coordinator for each school to engage and align external support systems and partners. Furthermore, town officials reported that the community has lost faith in the school committee as a result of its inability to stabilize leadership in the district and because of the absence of budget transparency. Not surprisingly, while town support for the schools has consistently exceeded required net school spending (NSS), the percentage of school spending over the NSS requirement has declined from 14.3 percent in fiscal year 2008 to 5.1 percent in fiscal year 2015. The district review noted that support of the town council for the school budget was particularly low in 2015, in part because of the absence of budget transparency (also the limited funds available.) The school committee had requested a 12 percent increase but the town council only approved a 1.2 percent increase. While there is currently more confidence and collaboration, a new superintendent will face considerable challenges in establishing credibility as a sound financial manager.³²

Rationale: By strengthening parent and community engagement at all levels and particularly at the upper-elementary through high-school levels, the schools will be able to fill gaps in knowledge, resources, and funding and tap into the strengths of the Southbridge community.

Offering a welcoming school culture for all families and community members and strengthening the communication pathways between the schools and the community will convey the school district's commitment to students and their families. Providing families with strategies on how to support the learning and development of their children as well as creating ways for students to extend their learning after school, during vacations, and over the summer will be key components of this work. Schools cannot accomplish all this alone. Finding and developing effective community partners and linking the work of schools to higher education resources will bolster the impact of efforts in this arena. The strategies included in this Priority Area emerged from the work of *The Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals (Fundamentals)*--- a multi-year collaborative process in defining guidelines and research-based practices for the engagement of families, schools, and communities.³³

Ensuring the sustainability of the reforms that the Receiver will put in place, however, will require the full commitment and support of town officials because the schools will ultimately depend on support services, adequate funding, and a shared vision as to the opportunities open to Southbridge students. To rebuild trust, the district is committed to being transparent and engaging families and the broader community in its decision-making process.

Strategy A: Welcome All Stakeholders.³⁴

³² DRR pp. 81

³³ See: Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnerships:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/parent/FSCPfundamentals.pdf>

³⁴ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 7 (1,7)

Schools create and ensure a welcoming culture and environment for all stakeholders, including families, children and youth, school staff, and community members. Stakeholders are valued and connected to each other in support of high academic expectations, achievement, and healthy development.

1. **Create a respectful atmosphere for stakeholders:** Schools and the district share responsibility with stakeholders from all neighborhoods and backgrounds to identify and break down barriers to family engagement.
2. **Develop personal relationships:** Family volunteers from diverse neighborhoods and backgrounds are trained to serve as mentors to help other families become more engaged in the school.
3. **Provide opportunities for volunteering:** Schools and the district reaches out to families and community members across all neighborhoods and backgrounds, acknowledging unique experiences and skills, and offering varied volunteer opportunities at home, at school, and in the community.
4. **Ensure accessible programming by removing obstacles to participation:** School and district share responsibility with stakeholders to plan and implement high-quality family programs to be held at school and in community locations (i.e., libraries, community centers, faith-based centers, homes in different neighborhoods, work sites, etc.).

Strategy B: Communicate Effectively.

Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful dialogue about learning, high academic expectations, achievement, and healthy development of students. Schools systematically share information and solicit input about school goals and initiatives with the broader community.

1. **Use multiple communication paths:** Families, students, communities, and school staff communicate in interactive ways, both formally and informally, in language that families and students can understand, using a range of interpersonal and community strategies, technology, and media. The principal meets regularly with the school council, parents, and student government/leadership groups, and keeps them informed of current school issues, concerns, and solutions. (See also Priority Area 1, Strategy B.)
2. **Survey families, students, and community members to identify issues and concerns:** Survey results are used to guide the development of the student engagement plan, family engagement programs, and other school activities.
3. **Provide access to school administration:** Principal and other school administrators have an open-door policy that extends equitably across the school community. They meet regularly with families in small groups, or one-on-one as needed, in schools and in different neighborhoods. In addition the administration collaborates with town officials through regular communication and engagement in plans for continuous improvement and refinement.
4. **Facilitate connections among families and students and community:** School and school council/parent groups take steps to help parents build relationships and achieve greater cross-cultural understanding of other families beyond their own neighborhood and culture.

Strategy C: Support the Success of Children and Youth.

Families, schools, and community organizations focus their collaboration on supporting student learning and healthy development in all settings (including home, school, and community) and provide regular, meaningful opportunities for children and youth to strengthen the knowledge and skills needed to be effective 21st century citizens.

1. **Link student work to learning standards which lead to college and career readiness for all students:** Families, school, and community representatives collaborate to align school events and community

resources to learning standards, and to ensure that families and students understand how to connect the standards to their learning.

2. **Use standardized test results and other data to inform decision-making about increasing student achievement:** School and district jointly analyze student performance data and jointly develop strategies to identify and reduce proficiency gaps among and between groups of students. Families, school personnel, and community representatives participate in academic and curriculum committees to discuss how to raise expectations and achievement for every student on academic and vocational paths. (See also Priority Area 3, Strategy C.)
3. **Help families support learning at home and at school:** Schools, parent groups and the community collaborate to develop and implement ongoing, systemic strategies based on academic performance data and needs identified by families to assist families in supporting their children's learning both at home and in school. The district forms a planning committee for parent academies and surveys families and community partners to identify interest in activities to promote wellness, adult education, and home-to-school connections.
4. **Promote out-of-school-time learning:** Schools actively collaborate with diverse community organizations, local businesses, and families to develop and provide learning opportunities. These programs are aligned with learning standards and contribute to measurable student achievement.

Strategy D: Advocate for Each Child and Youth.³⁵

Families, schools, and community respect and value the uniqueness of each child and youth and are empowered to advocate for all students to ensure that they are treated equitably and have access to high-quality learning opportunities.

1. **Help families understand how the school and district operate, as well as the rights and responsibilities of parents under federal and state laws:** Schools, parent groups, and the community work together to help all parents understand how their schools operate and how to exercise their rights under state and federal education laws in order to promote student learning and achievement.
2. **Develop families' capacity to be effective advocates for their children and to engage in civic advocacy for student achievement:** Schools, parent groups, and the community work together to establish school policies and procedures that support and promote parents as advocates and active partners in decision-making at school.
3. **Make resources available to support student achievement leading to college and career readiness:** Schools, parent groups, and the community collaborate to create a family resource center that is accessible to all families and provides information about services that support achievement; makes referrals to academic, vocational, college and career readiness programs; and helps plan family, school, and community events and informational programs.
4. **Help students and families make smooth transitions and ensure that students are college and career ready:** A comprehensive program is developed jointly by school and parent groups to help families stay connected and remain involved as their children progress through school. A college-going culture is fostered in all grades with each classroom "adopting" a university or college, and partnerships are created and expanded between the district, local colleges and universities, and community businesses to expand opportunities for career exploration and preparation.

Strategy E: Share Power and Responsibility.

Families, educators, and community partners have access, voice and value in informing, influencing, and

³⁵ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 7(1,2,3)

creating policies, practices, and programs affecting children, youth, and families.

1. **Develop effective parent engagement groups that represent all families:** Underrepresented, underserved, and/or isolated or disconnected students and families are active participants in the improvement of school performance.
2. **Develop parent leadership:** Members of underrepresented and underserved families are actively solicited, trained, and supported to become effective parent leaders.
3. **Ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in all decisions that affect children:** School-Site Councils, Special Education Advisory Councils, and EL Parent Councils will use the findings from the needs assessments conducted with families, school staff, community representatives, and, students in the high schools to inform their decision-making.
4. **Connect families and schools to local officials:** Local officials are invited to participate in community events in the district. In school year 2016–2017, working with the Southbridge Police Department, the district will ensure that there are trained school resource officers in place at the middle and high schools, during school hours and at school-based events. The district will also build on its existing partnerships with the DCF, the Department of Probation, and the Juvenile Court.

Strategy F: Partner with the Community.³⁶

Families and school staff collaborate with community partners to connect students and families to expanded learning opportunities, access to health and nutrition resources, and community services in order to support achievement and civic participation.

1. **Link to community resources:** School staff and school volunteers (and a paid parent liaison, if one is in place) use the school's family resource center as a place to inform families about services, make referrals to programs, and help with follow-up. (See also Priority Area 4, Strategy D.)
2. **Partner with community groups to strengthen families and support student success:** Community and business representatives work with schools and parent leaders to assess the school community's needs. Partnerships and programs are developed and strengthened to support students' success and are aligned with school and district priorities, including improving partnerships with community-based early education and preschool programs to better ensure that students are ready to enter SPS at grade level. Together each school and its partners find creative solutions to funding and staffing needs. (See also Priority Area 4, Strategy E.)
3. **Turn the school into a hub of community life:** Schools and the district offer resources and activities for the whole community, drawing on community agencies, organizations, and other educational institutions. Schools are open extended hours for use by outside groups to provide services and educational opportunities to families and the community.

Implementation Benchmarks

Strategy 4-A:	I. By winter 2017, each principal will complete
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³⁶ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 7 (1)

<p>Welcoming All Stakeholders Creating a respectful atmosphere for stakeholders Developing personal relationships Providing opportunities for volunteering Ensuring accessible programming by removing economic obstacles to participation</p>	<p>a family and community engagement audit about the use of family volunteers, programs available to parents, approaches taken to communicate with parents, and current level of parent participation in school events and conferences.</p> <p>II. Based on the results of these audits as well as parent surveys, principals will be responsible for working with their school councils to develop strategies and SMART goals by May 2017 to drive improvement in this important arena for the school year 2017-2018.</p>
<p>Strategy 4-B: Communicating Effectively Using multiple communication paths Surveying families, students, and community members to identify issues and concerns Providing access to school administration Facilitating connections among families and students and community</p>	<p>I. By spring 2017, the district will survey parents to solicit input about their perspectives as parents of students attending district schools. The results of this survey will help identify issues and concerns.</p>
<p>Strategy 4-C: Supporting the Success of Children and Youth Linking student work to learning standards which lead to college and career readiness for all students Using standardized test results and other data to inform decision-making about increasing student achievement Helping families support learning at home and at school Promoting out-of-school-time learning</p>	<p>I. By spring 2017, the district will form a planning committee for parent academies and will survey families and community partners to identify interest in activities to promote wellness, adult education, and home-to-school connections.</p>
<p>Strategy 4-D: Advocating for Each Child and Youth Helping families understand how the schools and district operate, as well as the rights and responsibilities of parents under federal and state laws Developing families' capacity to be effective advocates for their children and to engage in civic advocacy for student achievement Learning about resources to support student achievement leading to college and career readiness Helping students and families make smooth transitions and ensure that students are college and career ready</p>	<p>I. By spring 2017, the district will develop a plan to create a Family Resource Center and will identify the necessary funding, space, and human capital to support it. The purpose of the Center will be to provide support for parents on how to best strengthen their children's development and academic success as well as to help parents understand their rights and responsibilities under state and federal laws.</p>

<p>Strategy 4-E: Sharing Power and Responsibility Developing effective parent engagement groups that represent all families Developing parent leadership Ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice in all decisions that affect children Connecting families and schools to local officials</p>	<p>I. By spring 2017, a districtwide parent advisory council will be launched. The Council will be made up of school Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) leaders, representatives of state and local agencies that work with parents, as well as other pertinent community members.</p>
<p>Strategy 4-F: Partnering with the Community 1. Linking to community resources 2. Partnering with community groups to strengthen families and support student success 3. Turning each school into a hub of community life</p>	<p>I. By spring 2017, collaborate with community organizations to strengthen early childhood and preschool opportunities.</p>

Priority Area 5: Organize the District and Reallocate Resources to Ensure High-Quality Management, Accountability, Systemwide Coherence and Sustainability

Challenges: The district's recent history of administrative instability, low educator retention, and turmoil at both the central office and school levels, has had a detrimental impact. This chronic leadership crisis has critically impaired the district's ability to develop and sustain those key systems and practices that are essential for school improvement. The lack of student growth and improvement is a direct result of ineffective or non-existent systems and structures. District and school leaders have acknowledged the need to consistently use supervisory and evaluative practices and policies that are fully aligned with the state Educator Evaluation Framework, to promote high performance expectations, and to improve professional practice, climate, and overall effectiveness of instruction.³⁷

Central office roles and responsibilities were not properly designed to support the priorities and strategies needed to revive the education system. Current schedules and collective bargaining agreements do not allow for adequate instructional, planning, or professional development (PD) time to improve the quality and quantity of teaching and learning and to ensure that the needs of all students, including ELs and SWDs, are being met.

In the 2015 Southbridge District Review Report interviewees reported that the amount of time provided for PD is insufficient to enable staff to engage in the sustained, coordinated, and collaborative work needed to build professional ability and improve student achievement. The district calendar includes only one full and four early-release PD days during the school year. Further, with the exception of two of the district's elementary schools, which schedule regular grade-level teacher meetings, there are few regularly scheduled, job embedded common planning or meeting time opportunities available to staff across the district.³⁸

Rationale: In order to support Southbridge's turnaround efforts, it is imperative to develop new district structures and ways of working with schools in order to increase the district's capacity to effectively monitor and support schools and establish innovative ideas and strategies across the district. It is also necessary to alter schedules, contracts, collective bargaining agreements, priorities, and the allocation of scarce resources in order to allow for common planning time (which will improve curriculum, professional practice, and the use of data); provide extended time on learning (that is needed to rapidly accelerate student learning and close proficiency gaps); strengthen and increase PD (to increase the quality of instruction and improve school climate); open up alternative pathways and extra-curricular offerings (to meet the needs of all students, including those not currently being served by the system); recruit and retain highly effective educators (to ensure that students have access to high-quality instruction); and promote a professional culture. The district will then need to monitor progress and make adjustments as needed in order to ensure continuous improvement and sustainability both during and beyond the period of receivership.

37 DRR pp. 55-56

38 DRR pp. 57

In order to reach greater levels of achievement, SPS students need more instructional time that is used effectively to deliver high-quality instruction and enrichment opportunities. The district needs excellent teaching and leadership in every school, and high-performing staff throughout the district. The Receiver and principals require the authority to make staffing decisions based on the best interests of students. The Receiver must have the ability to resolve employee disputes fairly and expeditiously while maintaining her authority over all components of the Turnaround Plan. The Receiver must have the flexibility to reorganize the district staff, and choose and retain principals and other administrative staff who are effective leaders, have the appropriate skills, and bring focus and urgency in implementing the Turnaround Plan.

Southbridge has many of the characteristics and challenges of a high-needs urban district, so the strategies outlined in this Priority Area were informed by the five common “implementation challenges” of urban districts, as identified by the Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.³⁹

Strategy A: Redesign the organization to carry out the Plan.⁴⁰

1. **Extend Learning Time:** The district will maximize time for students’, teachers’, and leaders’ learning, including:
 - For the 2016-2017 school year, teachers will report to work on Monday, August 22, 2016, and students will return to school on Monday, August 29, 2016. The week of August 22, 2016, will include four (4) days of PD, and one (1) day for teacher orientation/classroom orientation. The last day of school will be June 20, 2017 (including 5 snow days). (See also Appendix A, IV)
 - As of the 2017-2018 school year, there will be a minimum of 1,330 hours of instruction for students K-8. (See also Appendix A, IV.)
 - The Receiver will establish the school calendar each year. (See also Appendix A, IV.)
 - All newly-hired teachers may be required to participate in a week-long teacher orientation/induction program as part of their professional obligation without additional compensation. (See also Appendix A, IV.)
 - Modify school schedules to increase opportunities for common planning time and professional development to support instructional planning and the identification and monitoring of both academic and non-academic interventions. (See also Appendix A, IV.)
 - Explore additional school calendar options to provide additional time for instruction and enrichment, to reach the required minimum of 1,330 hours of instruction annually for students K-8. This may involve programming options during vacations, extended day, year-long opportunities, and summer school.
2. **Explore Alternate School Configurations and Options:** The district will review alternate school configurations and school options, including but not limited to:

³⁹ See the Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education: <http://pelp.fas.harvard.edu/>

⁴⁰ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 1(8)

- Developing a proposal for an alternative middle- and high-school program that would effectively and efficiently address the social and emotional needs of the district's most at-risk student population (See also Priority Area 1, Strategy E.)
 - Reviewing and improving school assignment processes
 - Reviewing grade configurations and school distribution to maximize opportunities for teaching and learning
 - Exploring possible pathway options (i.e., dual language, blended learning, and Montessori)
 - Using proven partners and operators to support the development and provision of school pathway options
3. **Improve Central Office Support Services:** The district will improve alignment of central office design to support this Plan's priorities. It will also examine the location of district offices and resources relative to where they need to be used and will reallocate funds and staff previously allocated to the school committee to support school initiatives and district priorities.
 4. **Safeguard Services for Students with Disabilities and English Learners:** The district will provide adequate resources and supports to serve ELs and SWDs effectively. This includes establishing procedures to meet requirements and stay focused on students, establishing a system that strengthens accountability and documents necessary communication, and ensuring all educators are SEI endorsed. The district's efforts to establish procedures and systems in support of SWDs will be informed by the review of current programming. (See also Priority Area 1, Strategy D.)

Strategy B: Allocate resources in alignment with the Plan.

1. **Review Distribution of Financial Resources:** The district will analyze funding and expenditures in order to spend less on areas that have low impact on student learning and spend more on those items that are more effective and better serve the needs of students. It will arrange an external budget review, compare expenditures to plan priorities, explore options for regionalization, and establish a database for attracting prospective funders and for tracking requests to external funding sources. (See also Appendix A, VI.)
2. **Capitalize Upon Technology:** The district will maximize use of technology in support of effective and efficient instruction, data systems, and communication. To accomplish this, it will audit technology infrastructure, create a districtwide technology strategy, ensure adequate technology support system/ personnel, and identify key investments required for quality implementation. (See also Priority Area 3, Strategy A.)
3. **Maximize Use of Time:** The district will streamline policies to improve efficiency. It will audit routines and procedures and conduct a cost-benefit analysis, to include, for example:
 - Purchasing and procurement
 - Staffing (hiring timeline, sub assignments, etc.)
 - Student referral and assignment processes
4. **Manage Contract Services Efficiently:** The district will provide flexibility for procurement policies and processes to meet the needs of the district in the most efficient and timely manner. It will limit, modify, suspend, or invalidate existing vendor contracts where appropriate and identify additional external partnerships that might support struggling schools. (See also Appendix A.)

Strategy C: Develop and manage human capital to carry out the Plan.⁴¹

The district will align Human Resources' policies with Plan priorities.

1. **Establish a District Leadership Team:** The district will assemble a high-performing district leadership team that will ensure that each school and each department has the support and the accountability to improve teaching and learning at an accelerated pace. The Receiver will have the authority to reorganize, consolidate or abolish department, functions or positions; establish new department, functions or positions; and transfer duties and functions, as she sees fit in order to best organize the district to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students. (See also Appendix A, VI.)
2. **Develop a Strategic Human Capital Plan:** The district will develop a strategic plan to recruit, develop, and retain highly effective educators (See also Priority Area 2, Strategies A and C; Appendix A, VI.). The plan will include strategies to:
 - Strengthen supervision and evaluation practices so that effective teaching and leading are consistently expected and supported.
 - Select and retain the most effective staff: In order to ensure that the most effective staff are selected and retained, the Receiver and principals will have authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates, without regard to seniority.
 - Establish selection criteria for layoffs which will include the following, as appropriate: qualifications; licensure; work history; multiple measures of student learning; operational need; and the best interests of students.
 - Reassign educators and other staff as necessary.
 - Reorganize departments, positions, functions, as necessary.
 - Adjust the salary of an individual employee in order to attract or retain a highly-qualified employee, or when the Receiver otherwise determines that such an adjustment is in the best interest of the district.
3. **Implement a Receiver Review:** The district will implement an expedited Receiver Review so that staff who are not demonstrating effectiveness and growth either improve sufficiently or are dismissed. It will conduct a prompt review of educators on Directed Growth Plans, and educators and other staff on Improvement Plans, and those employees otherwise identified as having poor performance. Educators and other staff whose performance is determined to be unsatisfactory after receiving feedback and an opportunity to improve will be dismissed. (See also Appendix A, V.)
4. **Create a Dispute-Resolution Process:** SPS will use a dispute-resolution process that values employees' input; allows for the fair, rapid, and effective resolution of employee concerns; and ensures that the Receiver retains authority over all components of the Turnaround Plan. (See also Appendix A, VIII.)
5. **Revamp compensation approach:** The district will revamp its approach to compensation to ensure that individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth are key factors in a professional compensation system and that employees have opportunities for additional responsibility and leadership. (See also Appendix A, III.)

⁴¹ This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 11(3)

Strategy D: Use the Receiver's authorities to lay the foundation for successful turnaround

1. **Limit, Suspend, or Change Provisions in Collective Bargaining Agreements to Support Plan**

Priorities: The district will limit, suspend, or change provisions in collective bargaining agreements and employment contracts in order to achieve the goals of the Turnaround Plan. Further, the Receiver must have the ability to address issues as they arise, including making additional changes to collective bargaining agreements to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic performance of Southbridge students. Appendix A contains changes will take effect as of July 1, 2016, and must be incorporated into future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver and/or the Commissioner, at their discretion, will initiate discussions and processes as appropriate pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K. (See also Appendix A.)

2. **Change employment contracts:** Certain changes to employment contracts between the district and individual employees are necessary to achieve the goals of the Turnaround Plan. The Receiver must have the flexibility to choose and retain principals and other administrative staff who are effective leaders, have the appropriate skills, and bring focus and urgency in implementing the terms of the Turnaround Plan. Consequently, the end date for all employment contracts or agreements entered into with administrative staff members before the declaration of receivership on January 26, 2016, is changed to June 30, 2017. The Receiver may, at her discretion, extend any such employment contract or exercise the termination provisions of any contract. The changed end date supersedes any contrary provisions in any individual employment contract between the district and an individual employee. (See also Appendix A.)

Strategy E: Use data to ensure that the Plan is executed effectively and benefits from organizational learning.⁴²

1. **Commit to Continuous Improvement:** The district will build in time and routines for reflecting on the Plan and making mid-course corrections.
2. **Establish a Superintendent's Roundtable:** The district will convene a Roundtable of the central office team plus principals and teacher leaders from each school. The Roundtable will:
 - Monitor implementation and success in the aggregate, by school, and by sub-group
 - Review implementation of initiatives underway in support of the Turnaround Plan
 - Monitor culture and climate conditions critical to the success of the Turnaround Plan

Implementation Benchmarks

⁴² This strategy is informed by the following Local Stakeholder Group recommendations: 11(3)

<p>Strategy 5-A: Redesign the organization to carry out the Plan School time School configuration and options Central office support services Special populations targeted by the Plan</p>	<p>I. By winter 2016 a <i>draft</i> district schedule for the school year 2017-2018 will be developed that details how learning time will be extended for both students and staff. The Receiver will submit a <i>final</i> schedule by April 2017.</p> <p>II. By fall 2016, schools will report to the Receiver their current schedules for using or creating common planning time for grade/subject teachers (or creating alternative opportunities for frequent collaboration) in school year 2016-2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See Priority Area 1, Strategy C. By fall 2016, the district will have a plan to ensure that core academic teachers and the administrators who supervise or evaluate them will earn the SEI endorsement by June 30, 2017. ● See Priority Area 1, Strategy C. By spring 2017, the district will develop a plan for non-core academic teachers to successfully complete an SEI course. ● See Priority Area 1, Strategy C. By spring 2017, the district will have completed a review of current services for ELs and develop a plan to maximize availability of quality services for gaining higher levels of English language proficiency throughout students' academic program. ● See Priority Area 1, Strategy C. By spring 2017, the district will convene a committee to explore alternative program options for ELs, and identify a strategy and timeline for implementing at least one new program model beginning in school year 2017–2018. ● See Priority Area 1, Strategy D. By winter 2016, the district will review its special education program identifying best practices, inconsistencies, and gaps in services for SWDs in the district. ● See Priority Area 1, Strategy D. By summer 2017, the district will have analyzed the findings and recommendations in the review of its special education program and will have developed a plan for implementing the essential elements in subsequent school years.
<p>Strategy 5-B: Allocate resources in alignment with the Plan Financial resources Technology Time Contract services</p>	<p>I. By fall, 2016, the district will complete a review of all district expenditures and develop recommendations for areas where reductions and increases are needed. These recommendations will serve as a basis for developing a fiscal year 2018 budget.</p> <p>II. By winter 2016, the district will review existing municipal and district procurement protocols and recommend changes where appropriate to achieve optimal efficiencies and</p>

	effective use of resources.
Strategy 5-C: Develop and manage human capital to carry out the plan District Leadership Team Strategic Human Capital Plan Receiver's Review Dispute resolution Revamp compensation	I. By winter 2016 the Receiver and her team will complete a Receiver's Review of all staff who are on improvement plans, directed growth plans, or in need of improvement. Specific action plans and timelines will be developed and those staff who do not meet their improvement goals will have their employment terminated. II. By spring 2017, a revised compensation plan will be developed and disseminated to all teachers.
Strategy 5-D: Use the Receiver's authorities to lay the foundation for successful turnaround Provisions in collective bargaining agreements Employment contracts	I. The Receiver will provide a summary of the changes to the district's collective bargaining agreements to each union leader by fall 2016.
Strategy 5-E: Use data to ensure that the plan is executed effectively and benefits from organizational learning Commitment to continuous improvement Superintendent's Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Priority Area 2, Strategy B. By fall 2016, the district will establish a Superintendent's Roundtable (composed of district and school leaders, teachers, partners, and high school students) charged with identifying shared core values to be the foundation for cultural improvement, monitoring the benchmarks of the Turnaround Plan, and making recommendations to support its success.

Statutory Components of the Turnaround Plan

This section highlights how the Turnaround Plan addresses the specific student subgroups and programmatic areas identified in G.L. c. 69, § 1K(c).

The secretaries of health and human services, public safety, labor, and workforce development and other applicable state and local social service, health, and child welfare officials will coordinate with the Secretary of Education and the Commissioner about the implementation of strategies related to items 1–3 below, subject to appropriation.

(1) Steps to address social service and health needs of students and their families in order to help students arrive and remain at school ready to learn.

The district has multiple partnerships with area health service organizations and local and state agencies to provide direct health services, prevention programs, and health information to students and their families. The district will review its existing partnerships in order to coordinate health services, prevention, and screening activities taking place throughout the district, at all grade levels.

The district currently works with outside providers to offer school-based psychotherapy in its schools, matched with individual students' needs. The district will ensure that students receive necessary mental health screenings and services as appropriate. The district will improve its coordination of outside health

and mental health service providers with district service providers to maximize student and family access. Where gaps are found between students' needs and existing service partnerships, the district will develop a plan for addressing those needs through new collaborations. The district's internal ability to address the health and mental health needs of its students will be augmented by the addition of more specialized personnel, expanded social and emotional programming. In addition, the district will develop a proposal for an alternative middle and high school to address the social and emotional needs of our most at-risk students. For the 2016-2017 school year, the district will be working with licensed independent clinical social workers to provide, with parent support, psychotherapy to identified high-risk students. The district will also be administering a universal behavioral health screening test to identify at-risk students, integrating an evidence-based social and emotional learning curriculum, and implementing multi-tiered systems of supports. The middle school will also be beginning an advisory program in the 2016-2017 school year to improve student-teacher relationships and students in grades 6-12 will be required to participate in one extracurricular activity each year.

The district will also refine its processes for referring students and families to social service providers, as necessary. For instance, the district will build on relationships with outside agencies, including state agencies such as the Department of Children and Families (DCF), to assess and revise its current protocols for referring students and families to community social service resources. The district will continue to work with partners to provide professional development and information to school nurses, health educators, and behavioral health staff who work with students and families to address health needs.

See also Priority Area 2.

(2) Steps to improve or expand child welfare services and as appropriate law enforcement services in the community, as appropriate, to promote a safe and secure learning environment.

The district's focus on building a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations will be central to its ability to foster safe and secure learning environments districtwide. Further developing the district's partnerships with child welfare and law enforcement organizations---and incorporating these partners throughout its work---will help to reinforce the culture the district is working to create. The district recognizes that these partners must be involved in the work at the early, culture-setting stages in order to identify law enforcement and safety concerns.

The district is revising the current disciplinary practices and protocols by transitioning to a restorative justice model at the middle and high schools. The district is committed to analyzing the successes and challenges of this model to determine whether this protocol will reduce problematic student behaviors and address high disciplinary referrals, as well as in-school and out-of-school suspension rates. If the program is shown to be effective, the district will determine how it may expand the use of restorative justice practices to additional schools, at different grade levels. Some staff from Southbridge schools have already registered for an initial restorative justice training in June 2016.

Educators and other staff will use data to assess school climate, student supports, and other factors affecting the conditions for learning in the schools. Having readily accessible data that can be aggregated and analyzed easily will enable the district to identify trends and address child welfare and safety issues in the early stages. Increased roll-out of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports districtwide will help develop a culture that encourages productive and safe student behaviors. The focus on high

expectations systemwide will promote a safe and secure learning environment as the district strives to maximize quality instructional time for every student.

In addition, the district will partner with local law enforcement agencies as appropriate to ensure that all SPS schools are safe places for students to learn and educators to work. In school year 2016–2017, working with the Southbridge Police Department, the district will ensure that there are trained school resource officers in place at the middle and high schools, during school hours and at school-based events. The district will also build on its existing partnerships with the DCF, the Department of Probation, and the Juvenile Court.

See also Priority Areas 1 and 2.

(3) Steps to improve workforce development services provided to students in the district and their families in order to provide students and families with meaningful employment skills and opportunities.

In school year 2016-2017 the district will form a planning committee to survey families and community partners to identify interest in parent academies to promote wellness, adult education, and home-to-school connections.

The district will continue to build relationships with local business and college partners to create meaningful college and career readiness opportunities. College awareness will begin in elementary school with each classroom “adopting” a college or university. In middle school and high school students will continue this by participating in programs at local colleges.

See also Priority Areas 1 and 4.

(4) Steps to address achievement gaps for limited English-proficient, special education and low-income students

The district will strengthen the Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) program for English learners in all grades with a multi-targeted approach with attention to both sheltered content and ESL instruction. The district will build partnerships with local and state stakeholders who are committed to preparing ELs for college and career readiness.

The district will strengthen the academic program for ELs in all grades, ensuring that its program fosters rapid English language acquisition and academic growth. The district will build pathways to support higher levels of English language proficiency in each school. The district will also review its curricula, assessments, and instructional strategies to ensure they are fully effective for ELs.

The goal of ESL instruction is to advance language development and to promote academic achievement. English language proficiency includes *social and academic* language in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. ESL instruction provides systematic, explicit, and sustained language instruction, and prepares students for general education by focusing on academic language.

While the district strives for high-quality instruction in every classroom, for every student, it is particularly important that ELs and SWDs have teachers who are skilled in meeting their students’ diverse needs. The district will provide professional learning opportunities to strengthen educators’

ability to provide high-quality instruction and student-specific supports. For SEI, the district will apply to be an SEI endorsement provider for teachers who are new to the district, or who did not receive the training in the initial roll-out of RETELL. For SEI teachers who have the endorsement, the district will provide content-specific professional development (PD) on the Massachusetts curriculum standards and academic language through the cross-cutting practices and SEI instruction.

In order to identify best practices, inconsistencies, and gaps related to the provision of special education services to students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), the district will conduct a review of the policies, procedures, and practices currently in place for its special education program; this review will result in recommendations for action steps to address any gaps or challenge areas. Students will have increased opportunities to receive quality instructional time in inclusive settings. The district will also increase educators' and direct-service providers' time spent in direct service of students.

Additionally, the district will strengthen its after-school and summer- enrichment programs with the introduction of STEM-related ESL/SEI curriculum and embedded PD for teachers to improve their content knowledge, increase their understanding of implementing the standards, and continue to build their capacity to differentiate with culturally and linguistically diverse pedagogy. To foster the rapid acquisition of English language proficiency so that ELs can achieve academic success in all subjects, the district will develop new curricula, formative and summative assessments, and support teachers in the implementation of new programs.

See also Priority Area 1.

(5) Alternative English language learning programs for English language learners

In the 2016-2017 school year the district will disaggregate data pertaining to English learners and former English learners into subcategories to better address individual needs, and provide PD to staff so they understand the gaps in knowledge and specific needs of various groups of English learners.

The district is currently in the exploratory stages of developing a Spanish-English dual-language program and has met with the Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education (MABE). The district will create a team of local stakeholders and university partners, holding informational meetings and conducting surveys as a shared vision is created during the school year 2016-2017.

To increase college and career readiness of ELs the district will explore the possibility of a dual-enrollment program for high-school ELs at a local college.

To address the needs of students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) the district will develop a program with curriculum for SLIFE students. In school year 2016-2017 the district will create a system to identify already enrolled students who may be SLIFE as well as a system to identify SLIFE students as they enroll. Additionally, in the 2016-2017 school year the district will provide PD to staff about the needs of SLIFE curriculum development for this sub-group of ELs.

To continue to provide differentiated instruction to ELs in Sheltered English Instruction classes, the district will apply to be a SEI Endorsement provider for teachers who need the initial endorsement. Additionally, the district will provide content-specific follow-up PD on SEI instruction. ESL teachers will also be provided PD in rigorous standards-based instruction. In the fall 2016, a team of four district staff will take part in the Training of Trainers ESL Model Curriculum Unit project, and subsequently will provide PD to teams to develop curriculum for ELs.

The district will investigate alternative program options that can maximize students' strengths as they build their literacy in English and their native language. Some options may be available for all students, for example, a dual-language program to achieve high levels of language proficiency and literacy in both English and Spanish for native-English speakers and native-Spanish-speakers alike. In addition, the district will explore options to address particular needs: for example, a newcomers' program to strengthen the foundational skills of students new to the country and a program to meet the needs of ELs with limited consistency in their education (Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) and Students with Limited and Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)). The district will also explore establishing pathways within existing programs, for example, rapid English language acquisition and academic growth options in both Sheltered Content and English as a Second Language classrooms so that ELs can gain higher levels of English language proficiency throughout their academic experiences.

See also Priority Area 1.

(6) A budget for the district including any additional funds to be provided by the Commonwealth, federal government, or other sources.

The Fiscal Year 2017 budget was adopted by the Southbridge Town Council in April 2016.

See also Appendix C.

Appendix A: Required Contract and Policy Changes

SECTION 1: REQUIRED TERMS FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, §1K, the Commissioner and the Receiver must create a Turnaround Plan intended to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in the district. The Commissioner and the Receiver will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the Turnaround Plan. Among other things, the Commissioner and the Receiver may expand, alter, or replace the curriculum and program offerings of the district, or a school in the district; reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the district; provide funds to increase the salary of an administrator or teacher working in an underperforming or chronically underperforming school in order to attract or retain highly qualified administrators or teachers, or to reward administrators or teachers who work in chronically underperforming districts that have achieved the annual goals in the Turnaround Plan; expand the school day or school year or both of schools in the district; limit, suspend, or change one or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement in the district; add pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten, if the district does not already have the classes; limit, suspend, or change one or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices related to the underperforming schools in the district; provide job-embedded professional development for teachers in the district; provide for increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction; establish a plan for professional development for administrators in the district; and establish steps to assure a continuum of high-expertise teachers by aligning the following processes with the common core of professional knowledge and skill: hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture, and organizational structure.

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K(d)(5), the Commissioner and Receiver are limiting, suspending, or changing provisions of the districts' collective bargaining agreement. As provided below, the provisions set forth in Appendix A are necessary to the successful implementation of the Turnaround Plan and reflect mandatory changes to the district's collective bargaining agreements, policies, agreements, work rules, and any practices or policies pursuant to the collective bargaining agreements. These terms will take effect as of July 1, 2016, and must be included in any future collective bargaining agreements. The Receiver will provide a summary of these changes to each union leader by approximately August 15, 2016. The Receiver reserves the right to make additional changes to collective bargaining agreements as needed. Nothing contained in the Turnaround Plan or the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as they are provided for under G.L. c. 69, §1K.

These terms shall supersede any contrary provisions of the district's collective bargaining agreements or any pre-existing district or school committee practices or policies. The terms reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, work rules, and any practices or policies, and are implemented pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K. Provisions of collective bargaining agreements that are inconsistent with or do not otherwise support the goals of the Turnaround Plan are suspended.

I. Receiver

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1K, the Receiver for the Southbridge Public Schools is vested with all the powers of the superintendent and the school committee. Wherever a reference in a collective bargaining agreement is made to the "school committee" or the "superintendent," it will be interpreted to mean the "Receiver."

II. Management Rights

Nothing contained in the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Receiver and/or the Commissioner as provided in G.L. c. 69, § 1K.

III. Professional Compensation System

During the 2016-2017 school year, the Receiver will develop a new professional compensation system, which will be implemented after consultation with the union, and which will contain a career path which will compensate employees based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth.

Teachers, from within and outside of the Southbridge Public Schools, may also be eligible to serve in the vacation academies or any other extended learning program that the Receiver implements. Stipends for teaching in such programs will be subject to taxes and/or withholdings, will not be added to the base salary, and will not be counted toward salary for retirement calculation purposes.

The Receiver may review and adjust the salary of an individual employee in order to attract or retain a highly-qualified employee, or when she otherwise determines that such an adjustment is in the best interest of the district.

IV. Teaching & Learning Time

Professional Obligations

Teachers and other professional staff shall devote whatever time is required to achieve and maintain high-quality education in the Southbridge Public Schools. For example, unless formally excused, teachers and other professional staff shall participate in all regular school functions during or outside of the normal school day, including faculty meetings, parent conferences, department meetings, curriculum meetings, graduations, and other similar activities. Teachers will also be afforded regular preparatory time during their work week. Such preparatory time may include common planning periods and professional development.

School Schedules

For the 2016-2017 school year, current daily school schedules will be continued except as approved or required by the Receiver.

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, each elementary and middle school's program of instruction for students shall be a minimum of 1,330 hours per school year.

School Calendar

The Receiver will establish the school calendar each year. The Receiver may approve an alternate calendar at the request of a school principal, if the principal and Receiver determine that the alternate calendar is in the best interests of the students in the school. Alternative calendars may include providing year-round learning opportunities for students.

For the 2016-2017 school year, teachers will report for work on August 22, 2016, and students will return to school on August 29, 2016. The week of August 22, 2016, will include four (4) professional development days and one (1) day for teacher orientation/classroom preparation. Including five (5) snow days, the last day of school will be Tuesday, June 20, 2017.

Newly hired teachers may be required to participate in a week-long teacher orientation/induction program as part of their professional obligation without additional compensation.

V. Evaluation

Educator Evaluation System

Educators and administrators shall be evaluated according to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework as adapted by the Receiver.

The Receiver will develop and implement evaluation processes for all other district personnel.

The SPS educator evaluation system and the SPS evaluation tools for other staff will include a “Receiver’s Review.” The Receiver’s Review will be a fair and expedited process to ensure that teachers, administrators, and other staff of concern are identified and held accountable. During school year 2016-2017, the Receiver will conduct a prompt review of educators on Directed Growth Plans, and educators and other staff on Improvement Plans, and those employees otherwise identified as having poor performance. Teachers, administrators, and other staff whose performance is determined to be unsatisfactory after receiving feedback and an opportunity to improve will be dismissed. Teachers, administrators, and other staff whose performance is determined to need improvement, will be placed on an appropriate plan.

VI. Staffing

In filling positions, principals have the authority to select the best qualified staff from both internal and external candidates without regard to seniority. The Receiver may adopt any procedure(s) that she determines appropriate in filling vacancies.

The Receiver has the right to lay off teachers and other staff because of reductions in force or reorganizations resulting from declining enrollment or other budgetary or operational reasons. The Receiver will establish the selection criteria for layoffs of teachers and other staff. Such selection criteria may include, but are not limited to, qualifications, licensure, work history, multiple measures of student learning, operational need, and the best interests of the students. Where all other factors are equal, seniority may be used as the deciding factor. The Receiver may adopt any procedure(s) that she determines appropriate in the event of a reduction in force.

The Receiver has the right to reassign educators and other staff, including those who have been displaced from their positions. After discussion with the affected educator or staff member, the educator or staff member may be assigned to any open position for which he or she is qualified. If the educator or staff member is not assigned to a mutually agreeable position, the Receiver will assign the educator or staff member to a position for which he/she is qualified. Such an assignment may include instructional support, substitute teaching, or administrative tasks. If no mutually agreeable position is available, the Receiver may lay off the educator or other staff. The Receiver may adopt any procedure(s) that she deems appropriate in the assignment/reassignment of educators or other staff.

The Receiver may reorganize, consolidate, or abolish departments, positions, or functions of the School Department, in whole or in part; may establish such new departments, positions, and functions as she deems necessary; and may transfer the duties and functions of one department to another. In the event of a reorganization, consolidation, or creation of new positions, following consultation with applicable local unions, the Receiver may require affected employees to reapply for their positions in the district,

with full discretion vested in the Receiver about any such reapplications.

The Receiver may formulate job descriptions, duties, and responsibilities for any and all positions in the district.

All SPS staff are expected to be involved in a variety of educational and administrative activities that are necessary to fulfill the mission of the district.

The Receiver may outsource work in whole or in part, may transfer bargaining unit work, and may hire and employ part-time employees.

The Receiver may create nontraditional administrative positions in order to operate the district efficiently. Such positions will not be covered by any district collective bargaining agreement.

The Receiver may change work schedules for all bargaining units to mirror the time that schools are in session and offices are open.

VII. Dismissal

In schools declared underperforming or chronically underperforming, teachers with professional teacher status and all represented district staff that have completed their probationary period may be dismissed for good cause.

VIII. Grievance and Arbitration

Dispute Resolution:

Any dispute over the application, meaning, or interpretation of an action taken by the Receiver/SPS in formulating, implementing, or administering any component of the Turnaround Plan shall be subject to the following dispute resolution procedure, which shall be the exclusive process available for resolving the dispute.⁴³ Accordingly, the provisions of the grievance and arbitration articles of all the collective bargaining agreements are suspended and/or modified relative to such disputes.

Step 1

- The employee may bring a concern to the principal/head of department in writing within five (5) calendar days of the occurrence of the event giving rise to the concern. The employee should specifically state the desired resolution.
- The employee may be represented by a union representative at any stage of the dispute resolution process.
- Within 5 calendar days of the receipt of the concern, the principal/head of department should meet with the employee to discuss the concern.

⁴³ This dispute resolution process does not apply to disputes relating to the dismissal of a teacher with professional teacher status. Those disputes will be governed by the arbitration process set out in G.L. c. 69, § 1K(d), or G.L. c. 71 §42, as appropriate.

- Within 5 calendar days of the meeting, the principal/head of department should issue a decision in writing to the employee.

Step 2

- If the employee is not satisfied with the resolution issued by the principal/head of department, s/he may bring the concern to a senior SPS executive, designated by the Receiver, in writing within 5 calendar days of receiving the principal's/head of department's decision.
- Within 5 calendar days of the receipt of the concern, the SPS executive should meet with the employee to discuss the concern.
- Within 5 calendar days of the meeting, the senior executive should issue a decision in writing to the employee.

Step 3

- If the employee is not satisfied with the resolution issued by the senior SPS executive, s/he may bring the concern to the Receiver (or his designee, if applicable) in writing within 10 calendar days of receiving the previous decision.
- Within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the concern, the Receiver or his designee should meet with the employee to discuss the concern.
- Within 10 calendar days of the meeting, the Receiver should issue a decision in writing to the employee, which shall be final and binding.

General Provisions

- Failure of the employee to advance the grievance to the next level within the time period shall be deemed to be acceptance of the prior grievance response.
- The Receiver may suspend the time periods and notify the union in writing.

During the 2016-2017 school year, the Receiver will develop a dispute resolution process that will be applicable to disputes other than disputes over the application, meaning, or interpretation of an action taken by the Receiver/SPS in formulating, implementing, or administering any component of the Turnaround Plan. Before the implementation of the dispute resolution process, the current grievance and arbitration system will remain in place for such other disputes.

IX. Handling New Issues

Any changes which the Receiver deems necessary to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic performance of Southbridge students may be implemented after a 10-day period of consultation with the appropriate union. These changes may be implemented at the Receiver's discretion, consistent with G.L. c. 69, s. 1K.

X. Existing District Practices

The Receiver may implement changes pursuant to the Turnaround Plan notwithstanding any existing district policy, “past practice,” side letters, or extra-contractual agreements. To the extent that a collective bargaining agreement codifies and/or incorporates existing policies or practices, such provisions are suspended.

SECTION 2: REQUIRED CHANGES TO EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

Certain changes to employment contracts between the district and individual employees are necessary to achieve the goals of the Turnaround Plan. The Receiver must have the flexibility to choose and retain principals and other administrative staff who are effective leaders, have the appropriate skills, and bring focus and urgency in implementing the terms of the Turnaround Plan. Consequently, the end date for all employment contracts or agreements entered into before the declaration of receivership on January 26, 2016, with administrative staff members is changed to June 30, 2017. The Receiver may, at her discretion, extend any such employment contract or exercise the termination provisions of any contract. The changed end date supersedes any contrary provisions in any individual employment contract between the district and an individual employee.

SECTION 3: REQUIRED CHANGES TO OTHER CONTRACTS

The district must ensure that its use of all its resources results in increased student learning. The district will curtail expenditures that do not directly support the priorities identified in the Turnaround Plan, and reallocate funds and staff positions for more productive uses. Likewise, to ensure that its resources support the priorities identified in the Turnaround Plan, SPS will review its vendor contracts and will limit, suspend, or change those contracts where appropriate.

Appendix B: Measurable Annual Goals					
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	SY 2018-2019 Target
(1) Student attendance, dismissal rates, and exclusion rates	Attendance rate (Increase)	91.5	92.2	92.9	93.6
	Percentage of students chronically absent (10% or more) (Decrease)	29.0	26.6	24.2	21.8
	Out-of-school suspension rate (Decrease)	8.5	7.8	7.1	6.4
	In-school suspension rate (Decrease)	5.3	4.9	4.4	4.0
	Percentage of students suspended more than 10 days (Decrease)	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5
	Dismissal rate (Decrease) *	6.2	5.7	5.2	4.7
(2) Student safety and discipline	Interpersonal incidents (Decrease) **	116	106	97	87
	Weapons incidents (Decrease)	6	5	4	3
	Incidents of substance possession/use/intent to sell (Decrease)	11	10	9	8
	Incidents of theft/vandalism (Decrease)	19	17	16	14
(3) Student promotion and	Grade 9 retention rate (Decrease)	4.9	4.5	4.1	3.7

dropout rates	Dropout rate – Aggregate (Decrease)	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.0
	Dropout rate – High Needs students (Decrease)	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.1
(3b) Graduation rates	Four-year cohort graduation rate - High Needs students (Increase)	61.3	64.5	67.8	71.0
	Four-year cohort graduation rate - Aggregate (Increase)	64.7	67.6	70.6	73.5
	Five-year cohort graduation rate - High Needs students (Increase)	62.4	65.5	68.7	71.8
	Five-Year cohort graduation rate - Aggregate (Increase)	66.9	69.7	72.4	75.2
(4) Student achievement on Massachusetts assessments; (5) Progress in areas of academic underperformance; (6) Progress among subgroups of students, including students from low-income families as defined by Chapter 70, English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities; (7) Reduction of achievement gaps among different groups of students	ELA CPI - Aggregate (Increase) ***	68.3	70.9	73.6	76.2
	ELA CPI - High Needs students (Increase)	62.7	65.8	68.9	72.0
	ELA CPI - English language learners (Increase)	44.1	48.8	53.4	58.1
	ELA CPI - Students with disabilities (Increase)	40.1	45.1	50.1	55.1
	Math CPI - Aggregate (Increase)	58.8	62.2	65.7	69.1
	Math CPI - High Needs students (Increase)	52.7	56.6	60.6	64.5
	Math CPI - English language learners (Increase)	35.5	40.9	46.3	51.6

Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	SY 2018-2019 Target
	Math CPI - Students with disabilities (Increase)	32.6	38.2	43.8	49.5
	Science CPI - Aggregate (Increase)	57.6	61.1	64.7	68.2
	Science CPI - High Needs students (Increase)	51.8	55.8	59.8	63.9
	ELA W/F percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	24.5	22.5	20.4	18.4
	ELA W/F percentage - High Needs students (Decrease)	31.4	28.8	26.2	23.6
	ELA W/F percentage - English language learners (Decrease)	55.4	50.8	46.2	41.6
	ELA W/F percentage - Students with disabilities (Decrease)	61.6	56.5	51.3	46.2
	Math W/F percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	36.9	33.8	30.8	27.7
	Math W/F percentage - High Needs students (Decrease)	43.8	40.2	36.5	32.9

	Math W/F percentage - English language learners (Decrease)	71.4	65.5	59.5	53.6
	Math W/F percentage - Students with disabilities (Decrease)	72.6	66.6	60.5	54.5
	Science W/F percentage - Aggregate (Decrease)	34.2	31.4	28.5	25.7
	Science W/F percentage - High Needs students (Decrease)	40.8	37.4	34.0	30.6
	ELA Advanced percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	5.8	6.8	7.7	8.7
	ELA Advanced percentage - High Needs students (Increase)	3.5	4.1	4.7	5.3
	Math Advanced percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	12.8	14.9	17.1	19.2
	Math Advanced percentage - High Needs students (Increase)	8.4	9.8	11.2	12.6
	Science Advanced percentage - Aggregate (Increase)	3.2	3.7	4.3	4.8
	Science Advanced percentage - High Needs students (Increase)	1.7	2.0	2.3	2.6
	ELA Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP) - Aggregate (Increase)	35.0	51.0	51.0	51.0
	ELA Median SGP - High Needs students (Increase)	34.0	51.0	51.0	51.0
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	SY 2018-2019 Target
	ELA Median SGP - English language learners (Increase)	41.0	51.0	51.0	51.0
	ELA Median SGP - Students with disabilities (Increase)	28.0	51.0	51.0	51.0
	Math Median SGP - Aggregate (Increase)	30.0	51.0	51.0	51.0
	Math Median SGP - High Needs students (Increase)	28.0	51.0	51.0	51.0
	Math Median SGP - English language learners (Increase)	29.0	51.0	51.0	51.0
	Math Median SGP - Students with disabilities (Increase)	29.0	51.0	51.0	51.0
	ACCESS for ELLs Median SGP on ACCESS - All ELLs (Increase)	65.0	51.0	51.0	51.0
	ACCESS for ELLs Median SGP on ACCESS - Long Term ELLs (Increase)	27.5	51.0	51.0	51.0
(8) Student acquisition and mastery of 21st century skills	Percentage of high school graduates completing MassCore requirements (Increase)	51.4	55.5	59.5	63.6

	Percentage of students participating in computer science programs (courses, workshops, afterschool programs, etc.) in grades 6-8****	1.3	9.5	17.8	26.0
	Percentage of students participating in computer science programs (courses, workshops, afterschool programs, etc.) in grades 9-12****	23.4	29.8	36.2	42.6
(9) Development of college readiness, including at the elementary and middle school levels	Percentage of high school students having at least one early college experience in high school (includes passing AP or dual-enrollment course) (Increase)	11.4	17.8	24.3	30.7
	Percentage of students achieving college readiness benchmark score on PSAT assessment (Increase)*****	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
	Percentage of students "on track for on-time graduation" as defined by district	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
(10) Parent and family engagement	Percentage of families, including families whose home language is not English, reporting that they have opportunities to learn how to support their child's learning at home	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Area Specified by Chapter 69, Section 1K	Measure	SY 2014-2015 Baseline	SY 2016-2017 Target	SY 2017-2018 Target	SY 2018-2019 Target
	Percentage of families reporting that they feel welcome when visiting their child's school	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
	Percentage of families reporting that they receive responses to central office and school inquiries in a timely way	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
	Percentage of teachers conducting at least three home visits during the course of year	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
(11) Building a culture of academic success among students	Percentage of students reporting that most students in their classes try hard to get good grades	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
	Percentage of students reporting that they are able to get the help they need to be successful at school	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
	Percentage of students reporting that their classes really make them think	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
(12) Building a culture of student support and success among	Percentage of staff reporting that their professional development experiences	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

SOUTHBRIDGE LSG RECOMMENDATIONS
MARCH 28, 2016

Numbers within parentheses indicate # of LSG votes.

Recommendations below dashed line (----) did not receive any votes at the final meeting but were discussed at prior meetings.

R=Recommendation

C=Curriculum

SI=Student Instruction

C&I=Curriculum & Instruction

PRIORITY	AREA OF FOCUS	RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS
1 (22)	Closing the Achievement Gap (Curriculum & Instruction)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a multi-year cycle to review and implement curriculum that is aligned vertically and horizontally throughout the district. (8) 2. Develop curriculum that aims high by focusing the rigor and expectations to challenge our skilled and confident students and then provides scaffolding that supports the learning of all students to reach those expectations. (8) 3. Develop common skills (e.g., in reading and writing) and strategies that can be used by students across multiple subjects and contexts. (8) 4. Provide free pre-school program to accommodate 100% of eligible children and offer transportation. (6) 5. Expand the alternative curriculum for students who want to stay in Southbridge but will not be attending college. Seek out collaborative opportunities with town businesses to help craft these alternatives. (5) 6. Deploy more special educators who would collaborate with regular education teachers to provide more inclusive learning environments for students. (4) 7. Maintain or increase current levels of funding for arts, music and other non-core academic programs. (4) 8. Provide time and support for middle school and high school teachers to work on curriculum development during the summer. (1) 9. Partner with Quinsigamond Community College or other institutions to provide early college, dual-enrollment or access to college-level courses in the evenings or weekends. (1)

		<p>10. Establish policies that ensure balanced classroom assignments of ELs and SWDs. (1)</p> <hr/> <p>11. Use outside consultants to help guide the development of curriculum as a means of insuring that curricula represent the most current research and highest quality.</p>	
2 (20)	<p>Climate and Culture Develop & strengthen a culture of continuous improvement</p>	<p>1. Develop and strengthen an inclusive culture that allows all to raise concerns openly and honestly without fear of recrimination. (9)</p> <p>2. Provide support for teachers in managing challenging behaviors and support for them when they discipline students appropriately. (9)</p> <p>3. Provide more support for students with behavioral issues by increasing support staff such as psychologists & school adjustment counselors as well as by providing alternative programs for students to gain a rigorous education. (8)</p> <p>4. Develop a clear set of expectations with accountability of what all stakeholders (students, staff, leaders) can expect of each other and what is expected of them. (7)</p> <p>5. Review and evaluate the recommendations of the 2002 Southbridge School Safety report and address persistent areas of need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Create School Safety and At-Risk Youth Task Force that includes teachers, education support personnel, students, parents, community members and representatives from public agencies. o Create Faculty-Administration School Safety Committee. o Establish a formal pathway of communication with the Student Councils on issues of safe and secure learning environments. (6) <p>6. Increase the number of bilingual translators, faculty, and staff across the district. (3)</p> <p>7. Find ways to support the students' voices and encourage more student participation. (2)</p> <p>8. Utilize learning walks with fidelity. (1)</p> <p>9. Create a policy requiring school uniforms. (1)</p> <hr/> <p>10. Better utilize teams and team structure by allowing team members to select the leaders of those teams.</p>	C&C
3(19)	<p>Student Behavior Provide support for</p>	<p>1. Explore alternative classroom settings for students with significant behavioral challenges. (12)</p>	SI, C&C

	students who struggle meeting appropriate behavioral standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Increase the number of school-based psychologists and behavioral intervention specialists at each school. (10) 3. Update, streamline, and communicate an updated handbook that spells out behavior expectations. (7) 4. Evaluate the current procedures for tracking students in need of behavioral evaluations, interventions and ongoing supports. (7) 5. Provide more in-class support for students who struggle. (7) 6. Focus on developing a small number of behavioral expectations appropriate for each development stage that are universally embraced and applied at each level (the key is implementation). (4) 7. Institute trauma-sensitive classrooms. (2) 8. Restructure and appropriately staff the in-school suspension room. (2) 	
4(18)	Improve and strengthen processes that are linked to recruitment and retention of effective administrators who will commit to investing in Southbridge over a reasonable period of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop recruitment & retention protocols and faithfully adhere to them. (7) 2. Use the evaluation system as a source of growth rather than as a punitive tool. (7) 3. Strengthen the mentor program. (5) 4. Commit to using the protocols with fidelity. (4) 5. Insure there are adequate checks and balances for accountability purposes and also provide sufficient time for growth and development. (4) 6. Compensate educators appropriately and competitively based on their job descriptions. (4) 7. Hire qualified professionals based on credentials and skills, not friendships. (4) 8. Institute a well defined and proven process for hiring superintendent and principals. (3) 9. Hire (or share with town) a professional HR director that can effectively manage resources and human capital (healthcare, salary scales, discipline, negotiate contracts, manage employee assistance issues, etc.). (3) 10. Adjust and balance the stipends educators are paid for taking on additional responsibilities. (Currently, support for mentoring is not as high as coaching athletic teams). (3) 11. Develop clear job descriptions. (3) 12. Provide ongoing mentoring and support for leaders including the superintendent. (2) 13. Better activate our in house capacity to develop a pipeline of future skilled teachers and teaching assistants. (2) 	L R

		<p>14. Do a prompt search when there is a teacher vacancy. (2)</p> <p>15. Provide opportunities for teacher leadership. (2)</p> <p>16. Search process for leadership positions needs to include stakeholder voice. (1)</p> <p>17. Expect that administrators will be visible in buildings frequently. (1)</p> <p>18. Offer apprenticeships as a means of developing future teachers and teaching assistants as well as a means of strengthening current teachers (e.g. apprenticeships for science teachers). (1)</p> <p>19. Strengthen relationships with college preparation programs. (1)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>20. Expand the search parameters to reach out to leaders beyond the local region.</p> <p>21. Establish a professional library that educators (and parents) could utilize.</p> <p>22. Create ways for educators to transition to retirement.</p>	
5(17)	Significantly strengthen EL instruction throughout the district.	<p>1. Audit current services for students. Based on service delivery, craft an improvement plan that ensures that all students receive the supports they need. (11)</p> <p>2. Hire licensed English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to provide pullout and push-in English language development to ELs (11)</p> <p>3. Establish a transitional bilingual education program as a supplement to dual-language and Sheltered English Immersion programs. (7)</p> <p>4. Establish a dual-language program to build language proficiency in both English and Spanish as a featured program for the Southbridge Public Schools. (5)</p> <p>5. Support teachers as they implement new strategies from the SEI course. (5)</p> <p>6. Hire an EL director. (4)</p> <p>7. Review the placements and service delivery models for ELs on Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) and 504s. (4)</p> <p>8. Provide professional development programs leading to ESL licensure for current teachers. (2)</p> <p>9. Provide effective professional development for teachers. (1)</p>	SI
6(15)	Significantly strengthen and communicate opportunities to support students' social and emotional	<p>1. Hire a wrap-around coordinator for each school to align all external support systems. (13)</p> <p>2. Hire School Adjustment Counselors for each school. (11)</p> <p>3. Revamp in school suspension model to effectively address students' academic and social needs. (9)</p> <p>4. Provide professional development on working with students who have been</p>	C&C

	learning.	<p>impacted by trauma. (8)</p> <p>5. Investigate implementing a restorative justice model of school discipline at the high school. (6)</p> <p>6. Find the right balance between wrap around services (counseling, support, etc.) and accountability (consequences). (4)</p>	
7(12)	Strengthen professional development and focus on key areas to enhance instruction.	<p>1. Develop a multi-year district-wide plan for professional development programs based on district curriculum and technology needs. Include professional development that focuses on content area pedagogy. Such a plan must reflect and incorporate teacher voices, student data, and needs of the district. (11)</p> <p>2. Support effective implementation of initiatives by adequate training and acquisition of materials prior to the implementation process. This is important for administrators as well as teachers. (8)</p> <p>3. Offer Spanish language courses to current faculty and staff to build internal capacity. (6)</p> <p>4. Focus Professional Development (PD) on how to work with challenging student behaviors. (4)</p> <p>5. Move away from a one size fits all approach to PD; teacher needs are varied. (4)</p> <p>6. Focus on improving rigor. (3)</p> <p>7. Educators should not be subject to more than two professional learning initiatives each year. Offer a menu of options for educators to target individual licensure, skills or content area needs. (3)</p> <p>8. Provide opportunities for vertical teams to meet and focus on common problems of practice. (3)</p> <p>9. Provide support for inclusion. (3)</p> <p>10. Develop a focus on how to effectively instruct students with dual language backgrounds. (2)</p> <p>11. Focus on how to develop trauma sensitive classrooms. (2)</p> <p>12. Increase PD opportunities beyond the small number of days allotted. (1)</p> <p>13. Focus PD efforts on developing cultural proficiency. (1)</p> <p>14. Develop a focus on effective use of technology to support instruction. (1)</p> <p>15. Another needed focus is how to co-teach effectively with inclusive instruction. (1)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>16. Hire math and English Language Arts (ELA) coaches.</p>	

		<p>17. Tap into the potential of community resources to provide some professional development.</p> <p>18. Appreciate the benefits of providing teachers time to collaborate with colleagues who either share the same students or face similar teaching challenges.</p>	
7(12)	Strengthen parent & community engagement at all levels and particularly at the upper elementary through high school.	<p>1. Map the external resources (e.g. nonprofit organizations) available to the schools - especially, organizations that have missions that dovetail with Southbridge Public Schools' (SPS) educational goals. Clarify how the agencies can support school goals. (9)</p> <p>2. Employ a full-time outreach worker in each school building to improve connections between home, school and community. Improve outreach services to parents so they feel welcome into schools and offer them workshops on getting children "ready to learn." (5)</p> <p>3. Create additional parent liaison positions sufficient to meet district needs. (5)</p> <p>4. Select a student data management system and implement it effectively so that parent/teacher communication can be enhanced. (5)</p> <p>5. Coordinate with community partners to address issues related to homelessness and transiency and to promote a safe and secure learning environment. Collaborate directly with YOU, Inc. as a partner to provide a variety of community support programs into the schools. (4)</p> <p>6. Expand staff diversity (especially educators or teaching assistants who are bilingual). (4)</p> <p>7. Expand means to have successful communication with parents (update phone numbers & emails, utilize an effective student data management system, utilize the power of social media). (4)</p> <p>8. Clarify and communicate the many ways that parents can get involved and support teaching and learning – it is not just parent involvement, it is parent engagement. (4)</p> <p>9. Create a Post High School Hub with the assistance of community agencies and parents, where students can get assistance with resume development, development of portfolios, SAT prep, & college readiness. (3)</p> <p>10. Develop and promulgate a handbook for parent volunteers. Offer training. (3)</p> <p>11. Explore ways to share resources between the town and the school as a means of expanding services without outstripping resources (e.g. HR, Accounting, plowing, etc.). (3)</p>	C&C

		<p>12. Advertise school events in downtown area. (2)</p> <p>13. Inquire through surveys and other means about parent needs. (2)</p> <p>14. Wraparound Coordinators can be a link to families and the community services. (2)</p> <p>15. Work with local community college to expand dual enrollment potential. (1)</p> <p>16. Expand the use of the buildings in the evenings by the community. (1)</p> <p>17. Establish an Adult Basic Education program that includes English as a Second Language courses, computer literacy, mathematics and workforce development training. (1)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>18. Focus on partnerships that link students and families to employment opportunities and additional job training.</p> <p>19. Make parent meetings more inviting (e.g., add a social component to the focus of the meeting).</p> <p>20. Balance academic communication with relationship building (look to understand what programs have successfully drawn in parents).</p> <p>21. Strengthen the use of school councils.</p>	
9(9)	“Raise The Bar” for all students by enhancing offerings and support for our students.	<p>1. Create a College & Career Hub with the assistance of community agencies and parents, where students can get assistance with resume development, development of portfolios, SAT prep, college applications. (8)</p> <p>2. Address insufficient curricular offerings at the high school (an impediment to higher expectations). (7)</p> <p>3. Address preschool opportunities that are uneven or do not reach all students (an impediment to higher expectations). (7)</p> <p>4. Address very large class sizes at the middle school (an impediment to higher expectations). (5)</p> <p>5. Allow for flexible grouping so that more students can benefit from accelerated learning in one area (5)</p> <p>6. Offer an expanded range of after school opportunities/choices. (4)</p> <p>7. Strengthen college and career planning. (2)</p> <p>8. Work with local community college to expand dual enrollment potential. (1)</p> <p>9. Clarify expectations around entry into accelerated classes. (1)</p>	C&C
10(9)	Strengthen the technology infrastructure and the	<p>1. Select a student data management system and implement it effectively so that parent/teacher communication can be enhanced. (12)</p> <p>2. Strengthen professional development so that educators feel equipped to both</p>	T

	ways that technology can support improved instruction, communication, assessment, and data collection	access and use technology effectively in their instruction and communication (12)	
11(8)	Hire additional leaders to effectively manage key areas of learning and support to maximize instructional focus.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Key Support Areas Where Leadership is Most Needed <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. EL Director (14) b. Grant Writer/Community Resource Director (10) c. Director of Social & Emotional Services and/or Wraparound Services Coordinator (9) d. Technology Director (5) 2. Recruit school-based administrators who have proven records of working in districts with ELs, and a wide variety of special education programs. Leaders must be skilled and knowledgeable about successful programs and techniques to meet needs of this district. (3) 3. District and school level leadership must have a responsive structure in place to support the entire school community and provide timely feedback and interventions when necessary. (3) 4. Recruit school-based administrators who have demonstrated ability to create supportive environments and are committed to collaborative model of decision-making. (2) 5. Establish a professional learning network for educators to collaborate on best practices and communicate shared needs with administration. (2) 6. Hire Team Chairs. (2) 	
12(6)	Increase the extra-curricular offerings for students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve after-school transportation. (15) 2. Require that every student participate in an after school option once a week. (6) 3. Gather input from students to determine the interests and needs for after school programming. (6) 4. Offer an expanded range of after school opportunities/choices (tutoring, clubs, sports, community service). Reframe after school possibilities as a way for students to better themselves. (4) 	C&C
13(3)	Provide professional development for	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SC members need to be prepared to govern effectively and within appropriate boundaries. (3) 	L

	members of the school committee.		
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APPENDIX E: Southbridge Education Association's Recommendations to the Receiver

The key to any success is collaboration. Problems that begin in the school do not end at the close of the school day. Conversely, problems that begin in the neighborhood do not end once the first bell rings to start school. There is no substitute for a broad based community-wide effort. *Southbridge School Safety Report 2002*

The inclusion of educators in decision-making is vital to any successful improvement plan laid out for Southbridge Public Schools.

Over the years the lack of consistent leadership in the district has resulted in a patchwork of disparate approaches to attempt to meet students' needs. Our students deserve better than that. Teachers and staff can, and will, deliver a comprehensive education so long as there is a shared vision and common goals between educators and district leaders.

The Southbridge Education Association is committed to the improvement of the District and makes the following recommendations to the Receiver preparing the district's improvement plan. We align these recommendations to the areas of concern outlined in the state statute that addresses underperforming districts.

The recommendations come from surveys and conversations the SEA conducted throughout the district:

Social Service

- Employ a full-time outreach worker in each school building to improve connections between home, school and community. Improve outreach services to parents so they feel welcome into schools and offer them workshops on getting children "ready to learn."
- Coordinate with community partners to address issues related to homelessness and transiency and to promote a safe and secure learning environment. Collaborate directly with YOU Inc. as a partner to provide a variety of community support programs into the schools.

Safe and Secure Learning Environment

- Review and evaluate the recommendations of the 2002 Southbridge School Safety report and address persistent areas of need:
- Create School Safety and At-Risk Youth Task Force that includes teachers, education support personnel, students, parents, community members and representatives from public agencies.
- Create Faculty-Administration School Safety Committee

- Evaluate the current procedures for tracking students in need of behavioral evaluations, interventions and ongoing supports.
- Update the district-wide student discipline policies and procedures and ensure consistency and fairness in their application.

Workforce Development

- Establish an Adult Basic Education program that includes English as a second language courses, computer literacy, mathematics and workforce development training.
- Focus on partnerships that link students and families to employment opportunities and additional job training.

Closing Achievement Gaps

- Establish a multi-year cycle to review and implement curriculum that is aligned vertically and horizontally throughout the district.
- Partner with Quinsigamond Community College or other institutions to provide early college, dual-enrollment or access to college-level courses in the evenings or weekends.
- Provide free pre-school program to accommodate 100 percent of eligible children and offer transportation.
- Establish policies that ensure balanced classroom assignments of ELs and SWDs.
- Maintain or increase current levels of funding for arts, music and other non-core academic programs.

English Language Learners

- Hire district-wide English-as-a-second language program director
- Hire licensed ESL teachers to provide pull-out and push-in English language development to ELs
- Establish a dual-language program to build language proficiency in both English and Spanish as a featured program for the Southbridge public schools.
- Establish a transitional bilingual education program as a supplement to dual-language and sheltered English immersion programs.
- Review the placements and service delivery models for English language learners on IEPs and 504s.
- Provide professional development programs leading to ESL Licensure for current teachers.

Leadership

- Recruit school-based administrators who have proven records of working in districts with English language learners, and a wide variety of special education programs. Leaders must be skilled and knowledgeable of successful programs and techniques to meet needs of this district.
- Recruit school-based administrators who have demonstrated ability to create supportive environments and are committed to collaborative model of decision making.
- District and school level leadership must have a responsive structure in place to support the entire school community and provide timely feedback and interventions when necessary.
- Establish a professional learning network for educators to collaborate on best practices and communicate shared needs with administration.

Climate and Culture

- Strategic planning to establish a climate that supports parents, students and educators working together for academic achievement.
- Establish district-wide practices and protocols for faculty and staff to communicate with families.
- Increase the number of extra-curricular activities and academic support services, tutoring, and community events available after school and located in the school buildings.
- Provide additional options for transportation to and from the school buildings to support extra-curricular activities and community participation.
- Increase the number of bilingual translators, faculty and staff across the district.
- Offer Spanish language courses to current faculty and staff to build internal capacity.

Professional Development

- A multi-year district-wide plan for professional development programs based on district curriculum and technology needs. Include professional development that focuses on content area pedagogy
- Educator should not be subject to more than two professional learning initiatives each year. Offer a menu of options for educators to target individual licensure, skills or content area needs.

**Section Six: Salem MA Turnaround Plan
(pending approval)
pg 273-307**



Turnaround Plan Template

District:	Salem Public Schools
School:	Salem High School
Academic Year:	2019-2020
Date Finalized:	INSERT [by 6.28.19]

Section I: Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should summarize the essence of the turnaround plan in a way the average stakeholder would understand. (1-2 pages)

Salem High School (SHS) proposes to transform the student and community experience of the school through the strategies identified in this Turnaround Plan. Currently ranked at the 9th percentile in the state, SHS seeks to significantly improve academic performance and equip students for success in the 21st Century workforce and in college. The Turnaround Plan is aligned with the district's [strategic plan](#).

In 2018-19, SHS leaders received input on the turnaround process from various stakeholders, including staff, teachers, students, parents, and community partners. Stakeholder input led to the identification of eight challenges or root causes to be addressed by the Turnaround Plan, including:

- (1) Lack of connections between students and staff and the school
- (2) Inconsistent quality of instruction
- (3) Lagging student performance results
- (4) Poor attendance and use of time
- (5) Lack of empowerment, engagement and leadership
- (6) Lack of consistent and transparent communication
- (7) Absence of performance management at the individual, program, and systems levels
- (8) Need for an investment in social-emotional learning, mindset, and wellness of staff and students

In general, the assessment shows that the school and the district have individual activities in place to foster student success; however, there is a lack of systemic approach and coordinated leadership for these activities to successfully support learning for all students. This plan creates structures and systems to coordinate activities, streamline processes, and align the work to achieve desired outcomes.

SHS envisions a high-performing school where all students are engaged in rigorous learning focused on skills for post-secondary success in the 21st century. The transformed SHS will be a positive, welcoming environment that serves all students through Discovery Pathways addressing five components:

- (1) Content mastery through standards-based instruction
- (2) Answering big questions and solving relevant problems
- (3) Community-based learning experiences
- (4) Post-secondary planning for academic and career success
- (5) Skills of an SPS graduate: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, teamwork, curiosity, imagination, initiative, goal setting, celebration of diversity

The transformation of SHS will build on a number of current strengths including, but not limited to: the launch of standards based grading and instructional practices in 2018, teachers leading the development and integration of project-based learning initiatives, the expansion of internships, the Early College partnership with Salem State University, and the 2018-19 launch of the 1:1 technology program with current freshman students. The partnership with Mass IDEAS provides a greater community for learning and the local empowerment of an SHS team of teachers, a student and an administrator to steer this work.

Despite these strengths, a number of persistent challenges remain to be addressed. These include a declining student population (due to increased area choice options including Salem Academy Charter School and Essex Tech and demographic changes across the city of Salem), lagging student academic performance and achievement gaps for student subgroups, and a school climate where many students are disengaged and do not feel a sense of belonging. In the 2017-18 school year, over 40% of students missed more than 10 days of school, and 23% missed more than 18 days in the year. Overall enrollment is down about 10%. Academic performance is not on target in mathematics or science. In English Language Arts, performance is on target but not meeting desired growth rates. Lagging academic performance is also observed in subgroups such as students with high needs, English language learners, and students with disabilities. Fifty-six percent (56%) of students report a lack of strong relationships with teachers and 77% say they do not feel attentive or invested in their class work.

These challenges will be addressed through 4 Turnaround Practices, with specific strategies outlined for each. The practices and key strategies include:

1. Leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration: Establish a committed and effective administrative leadership team; clear and consistent communication channels; teams to distribute leadership; and performance management practices to monitor progress.
2. Intentional practices for improving instruction, including the Discovery Pathways course of study, core curricula, core instructional practices, standards-based grading, technology integration, and instructional coaching.
3. Student-specific supports including school-wide student behavior planning, shared data system, social-emotional learning and wellness.
4. School culture and climate: Building a positive environment and strong relationships, increasing attendance for students and staff, and investing in social-emotional wellness for staff.

The Turnaround Plan will include district-level systems to support the proposed change strategies. These include the altering of the core curriculum materials in grades 9-10 in 2019-20; the embedding of professional development through the expansion of the SHS instructional coaching team; the study of best practices with the District Management Group (DMGroup) in the development of systems for students' social, emotional and behavior needs; the financial resource allocation of the internship coordinator, the redesign coach, the new assistant principal position, and increased instructional coaches; and recent / ongoing financial analysis work with ERS (Education Resource Strategies) to identify resource inequities and opportunities to align current resources with strategic goals.

Progress monitoring through the identification and tracking of goals and benchmarks will assure that the proposed new strategies have the intended effect. The Turnaround Plan identifies specific outcome targets for each of the four turnaround practices listed above. Plans include Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) for student achievement and interim benchmarks for teachers/practitioners and students. Each of the MAGs will have an assigned administrator who will be responsible for tracking progress through monitoring the data and assuring that the strategies are implemented as outlined in the plan. Progress will be reviewed quarterly and publicly shared at semi-annual community convenings.

The plans outlined in this document represent the initial steps in a multi-year plan for transformation. The district and the school are committed to these strategies as the long-term effort to improve the student and staff experiences at Salem High School.

Section II: Stakeholder Engagement

Briefly describe the district and school's process for receiving input from stakeholders throughout all stages of the turnaround process. (1-2 pages)

Salem High School is engaging stakeholders in a variety of ways to better understand the assets, challenges and recommendations for redesign that will drastically improve student outcomes. In Fall 2018, the in-depth review of the 2018 school accountability report and the 2018 Panorama Survey (that included 700 student voices and 66 staff voices) was conducted. Additional information was collected through seven focus groups of diverse students, individual interviews with more than 25 staff members and all members of the administrative teams. Through this effort, five challenges / root causes (to be explained in Section 4) were identified:

- (1) connections and culture
- (2) quality of instruction
- (3) student performance results
- (4) attendance and use of time
- (5) empowerment, engagement and leadership

From November 2018 - May 2019, staff work teams (consisting of teachers, staff members, administrative leaders, district personnel and the redesign facilitator) met to conduct needs assessments / root cause analyses of current practices, carry out research into best practices, and make recommendations for turnaround strategies. Specific teams (with member count) included: bell schedule (4), Program of Study (6), student supports (10), college and career readiness (7 plus partners), adult culture (8), ELA curriculum (6), math curriculum (4), science curriculum (4), social studies curriculum (7), CTE program (6 plus partners) and Mass IDEAS redesign (5 plus a student). In addition, a recent program review of the English Language Learner program was re-examined and discussed with the EL district and site-based leaders. A program review is underway for SHS Bridge (an alternative option within SHS for overaged, under-credited students). The therapeutic support program (TSP), a special education sub-separate program, is undergoing self-study led by the Acting Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services (Special Education Department Head) and SHS team chairpersons.

The principal, academic dean and redesign facilitator led staff meetings quarterly to share data, update on the process, and seek input into the turnaround domains. Weekly meetings with the instructional leadership team focused on providing input while implementing instructional strategies throughout the school year. Optional turnaround workshops (with video and survey follow-ups) were held on April 24, 2019 and May 15, 2019 to seek additional input into emerging recommendations and strategies.

Parent and family outreach regarding the turnaround work was conducted through a Fall State-of-the-Schools Convening (November 13, 2018) and a Spring Multi-Cultural Convening (May 15, 2019). While engagement at the fall event was minimal, the Multicultural Spring Convening included more than one hundred participants (staff, students, community members and parents). A school site council was established in December 2018 and meets monthly with the principal. With the change in school and district leadership in March 2019, monthly open forums for parents and community members were established. This forum (attended consistently by 50+ parents and community members) is now being used to share and receive information directly from parents regarding the turnaround work. In addition

to the methods listed above, SHS will continue to seek parent input and engagement through participation in turnaround teams and the launch of parent Panorama Culture Survey.

Student council meetings facilitated on a monthly basis by student leaders in partnership with their sponsors and the principal are open to all students, with attendance at times being as high as 250 students. Through intentional exercises, students have provided additional qualitative data from discussions and surveys regarding their experience across all turnaround practices. In addition, students in selected classrooms are also responding to pilots of new curriculum and one student participates on the Mass IDEAS Redesign Team.

The 2019 Panorama Culture Survey was conducted in May to gather input from staff and students and new this year will be parent surveys anticipated by October 2019. These results inform many of the baseline indicators for teacher and student outcomes in Section VII.

Data collection through the winter and spring identified three additional challenges / root causes:

- (1) lack of consistent and transparent communication
- (2) absence of performance management at the individual, program and systems levels
- (3) social-emotional learning, mindsets and wellness of staff and strategies for students' development

Finally, in May 2019, explicit efforts to engage community stakeholders who are not currently formally partnering with Salem Public Schools began with the Mayor of Salem, the Acting Superintendent and school leaders meeting with the Salem Partnership, a coalition of the city's CEOs' of the major for-profit and non-profit businesses and other community leaders. This type of outreach along with expanded parent outreach (especially in the Latinx community) will continue through the summer and into the next school year.

The Turnaround Plan was drafted in mid-May and was vetted with all stakeholders in response to their input through the following activities in late May and early June: SHS administration team meeting (5/15/19), instructional leadership team meetings (week of 5/20/19 and 5/27/19), parent and community meetings (6/4/19 and 6/6/19), staff workshop (6/5/19), and public comment period (6/10-17/19). The interim principal met with student council officers of 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Ongoing stakeholder involvement with all groups previously identified will continue throughout implementation. Different work teams will be established. A Turnaround Monitoring Team (consisting of 18-24 student, parent and community stakeholders) is being established to participate in quarterly monitoring efforts of this plan's implementation during 2019-2020.

Section III: Envision the Future

Briefly describe the 3-5 year vision for the school as a result of the turnaround process. (1 page)

In 2024, Salem High School is student-centered and measures success through (1) high levels of student performance, growth for all students, and closing of performance gaps among sub-groups as measured through the MA DESE Accountability Report Card (2) 75% of students graduating with a diploma *and* a Discovery Pathways endorsement reflecting the SHS skills of a graduate, and (3) increased attendance, retention, social-emotional wellness and engagement due to the school's transformed culture and climate for students, staff and families. The student experience at Salem High School is radically changed through the redesign of Discovery Pathways and turnaround efforts to repair and establish effective systems across the leadership, instruction, student supports and school culture.

SHS Discovery Pathways promote a student-centered learning experience across a series of courses with a connected learning theme aligned to each student's interests and post-secondary success. Pathways exist within the STEM, humanities and career technical education contexts. Five required components of all Discovery Pathways, regardless of strand, ensure equity and access to a robust student experience:

1. **Standards-Based Instruction** - Students demonstrate proficiency in literacy and mathematical practices through standards-based instructional practices. Technology tools are used seamlessly for accessing, communicating, and demonstrating mastery of new knowledge. All students' programs of study ensure access to a comprehensive curriculum in order to meet Mass Core course requirements for application to college and university.
2. **Big Questions** - Students utilize project-based learning and capstone projects to solve relevant problems and answer questions for themselves and the community. Students drive their own learning and discovery. They take action locally and engage globally.
3. **Community-based Learning** - Students learn beyond the walls of Salem High School by completing internships, cooperative learning, Early College, dual enrollment courses at colleges, service learning and professional networking activities.
4. **Post-Secondary Planning** - Students participate in intentionally scaffolded exploration of careers, as well as their own interests, strengths and identity. Students engage in setting their own short-term and long-term goals. Financial planning, interview skills, and college options are taught. Additional supports for students are identified and provided through effective school-wide systems during high school and as they prepare to transition after graduation.
5. **Skills of a SPS Graduate** - Students learn and exhibit growth along six domains of development:
 - a. Critical thinking and problem solving
 - b. Effective oral and written communication
 - c. Collaboration and teamwork
 - d. Curiosity and imagination
 - e. Initiative and goal-setting
 - f. Appreciation and celebration of diversity

Through the successful implementation of the Discovery Pathways, SHS is the hub within a connected ecosystem for youth development across Salem, MA. Students and staff are proud to work at SHS and the community is proud to support its flagship high school.

Section IV: Analysis of Assets and Challenges

Describe the key assets to build upon, and challenges that need to be addressed, that were identified as a result of a thorough root cause analysis. (2-3 pages)

ASSETS:

The 2017 Salem Public Schools Strategic Plan identifies re-envisioning the high school as a district priority. This process included revisiting the vision and mission of the school and defining the Skills of a SPS Graduate. Several initiatives that began in response to the SPS Strategic Plan are taking root at the school, including:

- Standards-based instruction and grading practices – Implemented K-8, this practice has scaled to the high school and implementation has begun at grade 9. Standards based grading is helping teachers to prioritize content standards and identify measures of proficiency.
- Project-based learning – A team of nine educators is leading innovation efforts through the creation of gold-standard project-based learning across multiple disciplines, including Newcomer courses. All teachers in environmental science and health also utilize this instructional practice.
- Internships – More than 75 students completed community-based internships during the 2018-2019 school year due to the formation of a new course and extensive partnership work by the Internship Coordinator. Career Technical Education programs – Early Education and Care, Automotive Technology and Building and Grounds – launched cooperative learning experiences. Students within the Transitions Program, a sub-separate special education program, also provides vocational placements
- Early College Program – Through partnerships with Salem State University and LEAP for Education, SHS launched its first cohort of 50 students taking dual enrollment courses aligned to health care and information technology themes. A second cohort will launch in 2019-2020.
- Technology integration – A 1:1 ChromeBook program was launched at grade 9 in 2018-2019. Learning from this effort will support scaling the initiative school-wide in 2019-2020.

SHS also has many other strengths including:

- Robust offering of extra-curricular activities and sports;
- Weekly grade level advisory;
- Peer mentoring program supporting 9th grade advisories;
- Collaborative teaching teams for grades 9 and 10 core teachers and English Language Learners;
- On target performance in English Language Arts, as measured by state accountability test
- Extensive fine and performing arts programs including art, band, choir, orchestra and theatre programs and performances;
- Music Booster Club and Athletic Boosters engaging parents and families;
- Expanding Seal of Biliteracy initiative in Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese, and French, as well as lower incidence languages of Polish, Pidgin, Swahili, Tagalog, Luganda, and Albanian;
- Student leadership development through JROTC, National Honor Societies and Student Council;
- Expansion of a Student Council to open membership to increase voice and participation;
- Participation in the Career Technical Education programming by more than 40% of all students;
- Offering of 23 Advanced Placement courses;
- Re-launch of Project Lead the Way biomedical and engineering programs;
- Sponsorship of five staff members earning their teacher leadership credential;

- Access to an onsite teen clinic and Hawthorne Program to assist students in transitions to school from hospitalization services;
- Investment in staffing of student support services – six adjustment counselors, seven members of the college and career readiness team, behavior specialist, attendance specialist and Bridge Program staff;
- Weekly yoga and meditation class offered to all staff, students, and their families
- Investment in staffing of administrative roles – principal, academic dean, three assistant principals, career and technical education director, director of English language learning, and two special education team chairs;
- Partnership with Mass IDEAS empowering the SHS team consisting of the academic dean, school counselor, two teachers and a student to engage in deeper planning, communication and learning regarding redesign with a cohort of MA-based schools.

CHALLENGES:

Eight challenges emerged through stakeholder engagement and are identified as the root causes in need of transformation.

1. **Connections and Culture** - Both students and staff underscored a lack of connection to one another and the school, in general. More than 44% of all students interviewed identified the need for improved relationships, pride in the school, optimism, and motivation. Of 700 students surveyed, only 37% felt that the teachers were really interested when they asked how are you doing; only 33% would be excited to have them again in a future class; and only 27% felt connected to an adult in the school. Only 47% of students felt that they belonged at SHS. Staff report a desire for more authentic collaboration through co-teaching and planning. Staff shared feeling “isolated,” and not knowing all by name and role.

In addition to connections to one another, students spoke in great detail about a desire to have more “respect” from / for the building. To increase students’ connectedness to the physical plant, they are requesting attention to bathrooms, overall cleanliness, and maintenance of safe walking passages on campus. One student stated, “The physical plant reflects the respect that the adults have for us students.”

2. **Instruction** – Only 16% of students surveyed by Panorama Culture Survey were excited about going to classes. “Stop the lectures!” was a refrain heard across several student focus groups. Students reported a desire for more real-world connections, financial literacy, field trips, relevant and interesting electives, curriculum that reflects their cultures and backgrounds, inclusion of current world issues, more use of technology, group / project work, tighter guidance in choosing meaningful courses to prepare for college, and flexible tracks based on personal goals. Staff consistently asks for current initiatives to be deepened, rather than new instructional initiatives introduced. In addition, school leaders call out concerns about equity within instruction: How is it that students with similar MCAS performance data are enrolled in very different programs of study? How is it that 44% of the student body is Latinx, yet only 20% of the students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses are Latinx? Equitable access to high quality instruction is a core challenge that is not yet recognized nor advocated for by all staff.

3. **Results** - SHS performs at the 9th percentile overall. Improving test scores and graduation rates were identified as important outcomes. Mathematical conceptual understanding and fluency need attention. A majority of students are coming in underprepared for the rigor of Algebra. Students also identified the need for increased post-secondary planning support – deeper understanding of graduation requirements, alignment with colleges, exploration of colleges, career interests and exploration, and more engagement with school counselors.
4. **Attendance and Time** - Getting students to school and classes is a challenge. More than 40% of all students miss more than 10 days of school annually and 23% are chronically absent, missing more than 18 days of school per year. In addition, many students do not make it to class or through an entire period when in the building.

Additionally, students are seeking more flexibility with time. They are interested in longer breaks between classes for organization, seeking help, and completing tasks for the next class. Many students ask for a later start time. The inclusion of a study / flex period is a common suggestion. Students complain about having to take classes to “fill my schedule,” recognizing that the 8 period day provides many more options for classes than are required for graduation.

Staff, too, expressed challenges with the use of time. While the majority of staff identified a desire for change, alignment on specific changes for 2019-2020 lacked agreement. Additional engagement work and a shared vision for how to use time will need to incorporate opportunities for daily interactions with students (especially in mathematics and science), flexibilities for community-based learning (internships and co-operative learning), multiple elective options and access to the arts, and meaningful preparation and collaboration time for staff teams. Student requests for flexibility will also need to be explored more deeply.

5. **Empowerment, engagement and leadership** - Seventeen (17/21) staff members initially interviewed feel that Salem’s initial redesign efforts have been assigned to them, rather than done with them. Working *with* staff to improve the school is a key recommendation coming from the empathy interviews. In addition, students are also asking for the same, “Continue to seek our opinion.” The assistant principal reported that several students were overwhelmed with emotion when they received the invitation to share their perspectives, as evidenced by statements such as, “No one has ever asked my opinion before” and “You really want to know what I think?”

The district’s strategic planning process engaged the greater community in identifying challenges, needs and vision without explicitly engaging high school staff members or students themselves. Only 15% of teachers feel they have input on important decisions and only 32% of teachers reporting on the Panorama Survey felt that school leaders believed teacher satisfaction was important. Regarding their peer colleagues, only 20% of teachers believed their colleagues were supportive of new initiatives. To truly redesign the school, the change process needs to be transformed from top-down to bottom-up. Students and staff desire to be authentically engaged and invited into leadership opportunities.

6. Communication - In March 2019 as district leadership made SHS principal assignment changes, parents, staff and students demanded increased communication. Several concerns were raised about transparency, attention to systems and decision-making at both the district and school levels. Additional concerns were documented in work teams and focus groups in regards to the coordination of the school calendar, and notifications regarding school events. Parents and students are seeking proactive communication, especially in regards to teacher assignments, absences and grading policies.

7. Performance Management - The management system currently in place at SHS is a personnel evaluation system. Systems to utilize data to drive decisions and examine progress towards goals do not exist. Data collection protocols are unclear. The Aspen student information system is under-utilized as compared with other neighboring districts. Currently only attendance, grades and demographic information are captured in the Aspen system. In addition, administrative team members' roles are not clearly defined; ownership of initiatives is missing and protocols are under-developed and under-communicated. Awareness of this challenge was highlighted in the student supports review team while examining schoolwide systems related to attendance and behavior.

8. Social-emotional learning, mindset and wellness - Three years ago a schoolwide initiative to teach staff about social-emotional wellness and brain-based learning was interrupted by school leadership due to competing professional learning commitments. Staff and students report a need to address interpersonal relationships (teacher-teacher, student-teacher, student-student, admin-teacher), initiative fatigue, culture competency, trauma-based challenges, social emotional wellbeing and personal resiliency. Promoting social emotional learning schoolwide for staff and students is a current gap.

Section V: Strategic Objectives & Initiatives Aligned to Turnaround Practices

Describe the key strategies the school will implement, the rationale for selecting those strategies, and the plan to support them. If a strategy falls under multiple turnaround practices, list the strategy once, then reference it in subsequent practices. (Use as a general rule: 2-3 strategies, described in up to 3 pages per turnaround practice. Total page length for Section V is approximately 8-12 pages.)

Turnaround Practice #1: Leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration

The school has established a community of practice through leadership, shared responsibility for all students, and professional collaboration.

To strengthen leadership, shared responsibility and professional collaboration in 2019-2020, Salem High School commits to ...

(A) Establish a committed and effective administrative leadership team

As of June 2019, Salem High School has an interim principal (effective March 2019), an interim career technical education director, a vacancy for the director of the college and career readiness team, and a vacancy for a newly established assistant principal position. Four of the six remaining team members are completing their first year in their respective roles. To lead the turnaround work, SHS needs a stable, well-organized and high-functioning administrative leadership team. Identifying permanent leaders is a priority and forming a team of leaders is a requisite step to sharing and re-establishing a shared vision, mission and core values across the greater community.

A permanent principal will be recruited through a school-based process in the 2019-2020 school year. The interim principal will actively engage in hiring of administrative team members in collaboration with staff based hiring teams. Voices and perspectives of district staff, students and families will also be included in the process.

Administrator specific responsibilities will be shared with the staff during orientation. Three hundred sixty (360) degree feedback will be sought mid-year from students, staff, peers, district liaisons, families and community members to inform individual and team performance. The administrative leadership team will meet formally on a weekly basis. The redesign / leadership coach will participate in these meetings on a monthly basis.

(B) Establish clear and consistent communication channels across all stakeholders

Students, staff, parents and community partners provide consistent critique regarding the lack of communication from, coordinated planning by and trust of the administrative and district leadership teams. School stakeholders seek relevant, timely and transparent information in regards to the daily running of the school, dates, decisions, redesign strategy and improvement efforts.

The following communication channels are identified for implementation in the 2019-2020 school year

for the administrative leadership team to share information with stakeholders:

- Morning announcements (Principal, Activities Coordinator) – to provide daily updates of activities and events
- Weekly staff memos (Principal, AP) – to provide updates on happenings, concerns, due dates and upcoming activities; to coordinate and consolidate the sharing of timely information
- Monthly parent letters (Principal, AP) – to provide updates on happenings, concerns and the calendar
- Monthly open forums (Principal) – to answer questions, address concerns and hear feedback from the Salem High community
- Monthly Parent-Teacher-Organization meetings (Parents, Principal) – to design and execute events, campaigns and initiatives that build pride, enthusiasm and positive culture at SHS
- Monthly School Site Council (Principal) – to engage an elected governing body of community stakeholders in contributing to school policy, governance and budgets
- Monthly Student Council (Principal, Advisor) – to address student questions and concerns while gathering opinions and ideas for school culture, policy and the redesign process
- Semester redesign community convenings (Dean of Academics, Redesign Coach) – to continue sharing information about ongoing implementation of redesign towards Discovery Pathways at SHS
- Regular updates on social media (School Webmaster)

In addition to sharing information, coordinating calendars and space allocations across a comprehensive high school is required for smooth and orderly operations. To this end, SHS will publish a master calendar on the school's website for public access and the following Google (OR SCHOLOGY) calendars for internal staff access at the beginning of the school year, update them on a quarterly basis and lock in events on a monthly basis. The calendars include, but are not limited to:

- Athletics
- Communication strategies (listed above)
- Curriculum, instruction and assessment / testing
- Field trips
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Professional development
- Staff and department meetings
- Student activities
- School holidays
- Student recognition
- Team meetings

(C) Organize and utilize teams to distribute leadership and accountability

Members of the administrative leadership team need to effectively empower, encourage and support

others to lead across the school. Policies, procedures and protocols will be documented and made accessible to all staff.

Currently there are several teams that meet to communicate, but are not organized for decision-making, action and implementation. The Academic Dean, Redesign Coach and Interim Principal will streamline the existing and recommended teams for 2019-2020 to maximize involvement, time and work processes prior to the beginning of the school. The proposed teams to be reorganized currently include:

- Instructional leadership team
- Instructional coaching team
- Culture team
- Attendance team
- Turnaround team
- Mass IDEAS team
- Discovery Pathways / redesign team
- Innovators
- Department teams
- Common planning teams
- Student services team – adjustment counselors, attendance staff, behavior

Clear purpose, objectives, leadership, administrative sponsorship, agendas, calendars, and decision-making structures will be established prior to launch. District liaisons, community partners, and student voice will be embedded across multiple groups. In addition to the redesigned team structure, groups may be established throughout the school year to invite additional voice and participation from stakeholders for time-bound committee work.

The most important aspects of the reorganization are the streamlining of efforts and the intentional identification of ownership for team accountability.

(D) Utilize performance management practices to monitor progress towards goals and targets

SHS's current performance management practices are primarily focused on personnel performance evaluations. SHS leadership will expand performance management strategies to include the analysis of data on a formative basis in alignment with student achievement goals, benchmarks, instructional improvement strategies, implementation of attendance and behavioral policies, and application of professional learning activities. Establishing data systems and defining protocols for collection will be a pre-requisite to using data to inform decision-making and making mid-course corrections.

A Turnaround Team is being established to be engaged in quarterly monitoring of the implementation of this turnaround plan and progress towards the interim benchmarks for teachers / staff and students. In addition, two meetings per month of the administrative team agenda will include a progress monitoring report on particular strategies from this turnaround plan. Turnaround goals and benchmarks will be assigned an administrative owner and a team for action.

In addition, consistent informal and formal feedback regarding performance of job responsibilities and application of professional learning will be provided on at least a monthly basis to all staff members by

their evaluator. Monthly learning walks by instructional leaders and peers and monthly team meeting observations by sponsors will result in shared reflection of bright spots and areas for continued growth of individuals, teams and professional learning systems. Agendas with notes that include decisions, next steps and persons responsible will document these activities.

Finally surveys, beyond the Panorama Culture Survey, will be utilized with students, staff, and families to gain qualitative feedback from stakeholders regarding the effects of implementation and need for continuous improvement. Time for the completion of surveys will be built into professional development / staff meetings or advisories to maximize staff and student participation.

(E) Attend to physical plant / campus concerns

Students and staff both identify challenges with the cleanliness of the building, repairs, regulation of heat and air conditioning, conditions of the bathrooms and security monitoring. Administrative attention to addressing concerns in a timely manner with maintenance and plant management staff will increase the respect students and staff feel towards and from their teaching and learning environments. Student teams from the career technical education programs will collaborate with maintenance staff and management to provide enhance opportunities for job-embedded, onsite learning. The district's proposed capital improvement work is pending approval.

Turnaround Practice #2: Intentional practices for improving instruction

The school employs intentional practices for improving teacher-specific and student-responsive instruction.

SHS is committed to providing deeper learning and high quality instruction for every child, every day in every classroom. To this end, six intentional practices for improving instruction are identified for 2019-2020:

(A) Discovery Pathways

The redesign of Salem High School is focused on establishing student-centered Discovery Pathways aligned to theme-based career and content interest areas that focus on standards-based proficiency at grades 9-10 and post-secondary readiness at grades 11-12. All pathways are anchored in content standards, big questions that increase students' relevance for learning, community-based experiences that include advanced coursework and internships, and intentional exploration of career options and related college planning for post-secondary plans.

Initial work on defining pathway courses was completed in 2018-2019 by the Program of Studies Team. In 2019-2020, a "pathways" team will envision the student experience; "innovators" will continue to adopt project-based learning practices and encourage peers in their initial efforts; internships and work-based learning opportunities will be coached / embedded within the general curriculum; and emphasis will be placed on increasing access and readiness for advanced coursework through Advanced Placement, Project Lead the Way, Early College with Salem State University and dual enrollment

offerings. The Deeper Learning instructional model provides frameworks for this work.

Post-secondary planning efforts have been integrated into the MyCAP requirements from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. School counselors completed the freshman map in spring 2019 through training related to the Early College Program implementation while drafts for grades 10-12 need to be refined. Counselors will continue to implement programming 9-12 with increased progress monitoring, and expectations for all students (even those struggling with attendance) to receive documented supports and create a digital portfolio in the Naviance platform.

(B) Guaranteed and viable core curricula

In addition to instructional redesign efforts, emphasis will be placed on securing core instructional resources and practices, particularly at grades 9-10 in 2019-2020. New core curriculum will be implemented in English I, English II, Algebra, Geometry, Biology and Chemistry, and World Languages. Newcomer curriculum will also be adapted in these content areas. The curriculum was selected through a rigorous review process in the spring of 2019. Professional development in the use of curriculum resources, unit and lesson planning, use of formative assessments (including student work) and adherence to an implementation scope and sequence will be led by instructional coaches, district content directors and head teachers. Early in 2019-20, curriculum adoption and adaptation efforts will begin for courses in grades 11-12. Securing a guaranteed and viable curriculum in core content areas is a foundational requirement for building the Discovery Pathways and for ensuring equitable access to the curriculum for all learners.

The use of School City interim assessments that measure students' mastery of the standards in English Language Arts and mathematics will be utilized to monitor students' learning progress. The School City interim assessments will be utilized three times per year, each one assessing the standards aligned to the curriculum and SHS standards-based grading practices (described below).

(C) Core instructional practices

As of 2018-2019, Salem Public Schools prioritizes four instructional priorities within each classroom: (1) welcoming environment, (2) meaningful interactions, (3) adapted texts and (4) comprehensible input. The continued use of these four priorities will help to transform the current experience of learning described by students as "boring," "lectures" or "worksheets." Creating the conditions for learning through relationships and culture, increasing students' intentional talk, using grade level texts with scaffolds for access and varying instructional modalities will support a move from teacher-centered to student-centered instructional practice. Professional development will focus on each of these aspects and learning walks and student surveys will assess the transformation of core instructional practice. Faculty consistently exhibiting proficient and distinguished practices in these areas will be identified for peer observations. Learning walks with participation by peers, and by students in the second semester, will help to norm expectations.

(D) Standards-based grading practices

Standards-based grading practices and reporting will be expanded from 9th grade to 9th and 10th grade core subjects in 2019-2020. The prioritization of standards, defining proficiency scales, providing high

quality feedback to students regarding their learning and calibrating grading practices will continue to be a focus. This focus allows teachers to become more intentional in scaffolding student learning towards the standard, rather than solely teaching students at their current level of performance. All instructional staff will participate in standards-based instructional professional learning either through implementation in 2019-2020 (9th and 10th grades) or readiness activities for 2020-2021 (grades 11-12 and electives).

(E) Instructional Coaching

SHS is doubling the size of its coaching cadre from 2.5 to 5.0 full time staff members to provide 1:1 job-embedded targeted coaching with individual teachers. Coaches are being hired with expertise in English language arts, mathematics, science, standards-based instruction and English language learning strategies to support the shift in instructional practice towards student-centered learning. The expansion of the coaching cadre provides the opportunity for all teachers to receive peer-to-peer professional learning. Teachers proficient or advanced in their practice will have the opportunity to choose coaching cycle goals related to all priorities listed above. Teachers working to demonstrate proficiency will be supported in coaching cycles focused on core instructional practices, lesson planning, differentiation and classroom management. Engagement in instructional coaching is designed to be an asset-based professional practice.

Roles of the head teacher, instructional coaches, district content liaisons and evaluators will be clarified and communicated. The Academic Dean will provide ongoing professional development for the coaching cadre on a monthly basis upon completion of a weeklong orientation in summer 2019.

(F) Technology integration

The 1:1 computer program will be expanded from grade 9 to grades 9-12 in 2019-2020. Equal access allows all students and teachers to utilize online tools to deepen, enhance and track tier 1 learning goals. Funding for this initiative has been secured through the district budget. Schoology serves as the learning platform for classroom communication. Five online tools / apps will be incorporated into instructional practice: Nearpod, Actively Learn, Explain Everything, WeVideo, and Read-Write-Gold. Teachers and students will be expected to use Schoology and at least two apps with proficiency.

Turnaround Practice #3: Student-specific supports and instruction to all students

The school is able to provide student-specific supports and interventions informed by data and the identification of student-specific needs.

More than 76 student support services provided at SHS have been identified across the academic, health, family, social-emotional behavior and college and career readiness domains. These services are in place, but are not coordinated nor consistently documented. Supports are people-based rather than systems-based; students and staff refer to and access services based on who they know rather than

utilizing protocols. Case management roles and responsibilities are unclear. The student support staff and the academic staff do not currently have structures to support face-to-face collaboration nor digital communication. Trust between staff and administration is challenged by the lack of communication systems that document the follow through of student referrals regarding behavior, attendance and discipline.

SHS priorities for 2019-2020 focus on re-establishing clear tier 1 practices for behavior, assessment of student needs, documentation of family engagement and the provision of student services. In addition, initial work will begin to outline a more comprehensive approach to embedding social emotional learning and wellness into the curriculum and culture for students and staff.

A. Social-emotional learning and wellness

SHS currently supports students in the development of social emotional learning through an advisory program in which 2 adults meet weekly with a group of students. The advisory program has evolved to serve many purposes over the year and needs to re-prioritize social emotional learning and executive functioning skills. Additionally consistent attendance and engagement from students is challenging as this is a non-credit bearing class currently. Beyond advisory, there are no tier 1 services provided to students. Adjustment counselors, behavior interventionists and school counselors provide tier 2 and 3 supports to students with learning disabilities and others, as time permits.

Using the CASEL school-wide SEL process, 2019-2020 efforts will focus on building awareness, commitment and ownership for creating a comprehensive school-wide plan. Strengthening adult culture and social emotional wellness is a prerequisite to promoting social emotional learning for students. This will be discussed further in the next section. Revisiting the use of the advisory program will be a first step in moving towards development and implementation of tier 1 services. One area of strength upon which to build is the existing peer mentoring program that could be expanded and enhanced.

B. Schoolwide student behavior plan

The assistant principals with support of the interim principal and in partnership with a working team of staff, students and families will clearly define, communicate and train the entire staff on the expectations and boundaries for student and staff behaviors and the protocols to use when expectations are not met. Students will also be trained during the initial week of school with ongoing review sessions across the school year. Due to student mobility and ongoing enrollment, regular orientation sessions (including the use of videos) will be created and conducted to ensure that behavior expectations are consistently communicated and taught to all students and staff.

A current barrier to the implementation of the schoolwide behavior plan is the need to expand the use of Aspen student information system. Work with IT professionals and district liaisons for the student information system will take place in summer 2019 to insure readiness for use in the 2019-2020 school year. The Aspen system will be used for referring students for misconduct, documenting responses and communicating back to the referring constituent. Other systems currently in place will be discontinued.

Ongoing progress monitoring of the behavior referrals and the system's responses will be a new practice for the administrative leadership team in 2019-2020.

C. Identifying and addressing student supports

SHS will reconfigure the school counselors, adjustment counselors and assistant principal assignments to create teams of service providers for shared students. Case management responsibilities to identify student supports will be defined and practices to conduct needs assessments with teachers will be piloted. Protocols will be piloted with stakeholder user input and will be revised and documented by June 2020 for school-wide use in 2020-2021. SPS utilizes the City Connects model in K-8 schools. This model will be adapted to the high school context to ensure that all students have a needs assessment conducted twice annually.

The Aspen journal pages will be utilized to document the provision of student support services and family engagement. Viewing access and documentation training in the Aspen system will be required for staff. A key learning in the pilot activities will be balancing the need for professional trust among staff and the student's right to confidentiality, in accordance with HIPAA regulations.

D. Shared data system

As noted above, expanded use of the Aspen student information system is a key strategy in increasing communication and coordination of student supports school-wide. City of Salem employees (rather than school district staff) currently manage all technology, including the Aspen system, creating a barrier to IT support and local customization at the site level. The district will work with the Mayor and city's Chief Information Officer to better support the district and Salem High School's technology needs. Salem High School will serve as lead innovator in this expanded use of existing technology.

Turnaround Practice #4: School Culture and Climate

A safe, orderly, and respectful environment for students and a collegial and collaborative culture among teachers.

SHS leadership recognizes that investments of time, energy and focus in building the school's culture and climate is as important as the instructional and student support strategies listed above. Many of the challenges identified in the root cause analysis indicate a need for this investment, including with staff as a means to creating the learning conditions necessary for students. The goal is to move the balkanized professional school culture (as assessed by the Adult Culture Committee) of cliques, personal agendas and competition for resources towards a more collaborative culture of shared values, work and responsibility. Several strategies will be required to strengthen rapport, repair trust and build stronger relationships among staff, students, administrators and families. Communication strategies are addressed under turnaround practice #1B. The data system for communication is identified under turnaround practice #3D. School-wide Tier 1 behavior expectations are addressed in turnaround practice #3A. Team empowerment is discussed in turnaround practice #1C. Increased accountability and ownership for program implementation is found in turnaround practice #1D. Three additional strategies are addressed below:

A. Building a positive environment and strong relationships

SHS seeks to be a school where students want to come and adults want to work. In order to improve the learning and working conditions, it is necessary to focus on building a culture based on trust. In order to establish a culture of recognition and appreciation for effort, growth and performance, SHS commits to instituting quarterly celebrations of students' success and monthly recognition of staff contributions. Initial efforts in the spring of 2018-2019 were well received by the community. Efforts from previous years at celebrating students will be reinstated, such as student of the month and honor roll celebrations, and effort will be put into maintaining established traditions that support school spirit and pride.

Onboarding of new students and staff will also occur with an orientation for all new 9th grade students and new staff members in August 2019. "Re-orientation" for all returning students will occur during the first week of school when students and staff invest in establishing relationships and teaching expectations for behavior and leadership. In addition, monthly orientation sessions will be conducted for students and staff joining the community throughout the school year. Videos will be available for consistent and shared communication of expectations.

Expanding communication, increasing voice and offering choices are strategies for building rapport. While implementing the strategies for increased voice for students identified in the SPS strategic plan, staff will also make an effort to increase two-way communication with parents and family members. Every month each staff member will reach out to five families to engage them in a conversation to support the student's progress and identify needs. This will mean an additional 250 touch points per month, or more than 2000 across the school year. Engaging in shared conversation and commitments to students will build needed relationships and partnerships.

B. Increasing attendance for students and staff

Because over 40% of students miss more than 10 days per year, increasing student attendance is a key turnaround strategy. Staff attendance is also a big issue impacting teaching and learning and will be addressed through this plan.

An attendance campaign of "5 or less" will anchor efforts to increase student attendance. SHS has been utilizing social services and court mandates to address chronic attendance, yet a larger initiative and a review of systems is needed. As a first step, the roles, responsibilities, and reporting structures of staff who work on attendance issues will be revisited and clarified. Protocols for recording student attendance will also be reviewed and staff retrained as needed. State definitions of daily attendance will be recalibrated within the Aspen data system. Case management for chronically absent students will be assigned. Additional attendance boosting strategies will be developed once key systems are in place.

In addition to student attendance initiatives, the "5 or less" campaign will also be used to motivate staff to work towards 95% attendance. SHS leadership commits to having staffing plans in place and to communicating with parents and students in advance for all anticipated long-term absences of teachers. Increasing staff attendance provides more opportunities for colleagues to maximize preparation and duty periods for collaboration (rather than serve as substitute teachers) and provides higher quality

learning experiences for all students.

C. Investing in social-emotional wellness of staff

SHS staff have expressed initiative fatigue, frustration with lack of systems, not knowing one another, insufficient communication, and working with students who are disrespectful and often challenged by trauma as great concerns for sustaining their own social-emotional wellness and resiliency.

As part of outlining the school-wide plan for social-emotional learning (SEL) discussed in turnaround practice #3D, initial work with staff will include learning about their own social emotional wellness, collaborating on strategies to promote SEL and modeling SEL throughout the school. Areas of focus for professional learning may include brain-based models for workplace collaboration, examining biases for cultural competence, growth mindset, self-care and re-energizing. Collaborative structures will be integrated into team meetings: staff shared agreements, peer consultancies, mindfulness and wellness practices, hospitality, appreciations and team building activities. As adults learn and collaborate around SEL, they will be able to model for students and be more prepared to contribute to the expanded student services in future years.

Leaders of professional learning and meetings at SHS will work to consistently incorporate the three signature SEL practices: opening rituals, engaging practices (sense making and “brain breaks”) and optimistic closures. The redesign facilitator will provide training and coaching on meeting structures to administrative team members in the summer of 2019 and ongoing feedback regarding their implementation during the 2019-2020 school year.

Section VI: District Systems

Districts describe changes in policies/autonomies, systems to support school-level turnaround plans, and a three-year financial plan for the school, including an analysis of resource inequities. (2-3 pages)

Salem High School's governance, the Salem School Committee, is in full support of the need and strategies for redesign / turnaround. They have approved leadership coach and redesign consultant, Barbara Crock of Crock Leadership Associates, to continue in partnership with the district and school-based administrative teams for the 2019-2020 school year.

District leadership has prioritized three policies for revision. None of these changes currently require a modification to the union contract. As the high school redesign/turnaround efforts progress, collaborative discussions with the union will continue as the district works to support SHS turnaround goals. Policies, such as a new bell schedule or start time, will also require the approval of the City of Salem School Committee.

First, alter the curriculum. In partnership with district leaders, school staff members reviewed and identified, and piloted new core content curriculum resources in spring 2019. Curricular materials were ordered by May 25, 2019 and professional learning for staff is scheduled for June and August 2019 in preparation for use in the new school year. Curricula chosen includes:

- English Language Arts: Study Sync
- Social Studies: DBQ Project Online and Choices Program (Brown University)
- Mathematics: Mathematics Vision Project
- Science: Pearson Biology

Second, embed professional development. District leaders collaborated with school leadership to identify the expansion of the instructional coaching team in order to ensure job-embedded professional development for all teachers during the 2019-2020 school year. More information regarding this strategy is included in turnaround practice #2F.

Third, study best practices. SPS has secured the District Management Group (DMG) to provide guidance for and development of the district's supports for students' social, emotional and behavior needs. Key strategies to be implemented prior to the opening of school in 2019-2020 include facilitated discussions with school leaders and staff, professional development regarding best practices to extend the impact of existing staff and revision of systems, and the completion of a social-emotional-behavioral supports opportunity review. Resources are based on the What Works Clearing House, John Hattie's Visual Learning, Jessica Minahan's "The Behavior Code" and Ross Greene's "Lost at School." This work will directly support turnaround practices #3A-3D and #4A-C.

In addition, district leadership is committed to both analyzing the use of existing resources and securing additional resources to support the Salem High School turnaround and other school and system-level improvements as needed. To date, the district has committed existing resources to support the redesign of the College and Career Center space (in 2017-18) and a capital request has been made to support the

redesign of the high school library. Resources have also and will continue to support the internship program, partnership with the redesign coach, increased instructional coaches in the building, as well as a new Assistant Principal position. Continued support for curriculum acquisition is also expected. New grants from Mass IDEAS, Nellie May Foundation, and the Barr Foundation have been awarded.

While securing new resources to support the high school is a priority, so is the work to ensure that existing resources are well spent. This year, the district partnered with ERS (Education Resource Strategies) in a deep analysis of how the district's people, time, and money are spent. This analysis has served as a starting point to better understand where resource inequities may exist and how resources may become better aligned to meet our strategic goals.

Changes in Policy and Strategies to Consider under State Law

Districts are required to consider the following changes to policy and strategies for any school designated Underperforming, and are granted statutory flexibilities to enhance their efforts to address them. However all schools, even those without this designation, can benefit from considering these changes. Check all that apply and attach a copy of the revised collective bargaining agreement. Joint Resolution Committee decision, or Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement.

Curriculum and Instruction

☒ **Expand, alter, or replace curriculum:** The Superintendent may expand, alter or replace the curriculum and program offerings of the school, including the implementation of research based early literacy programs, early interventions for struggling readers and the teaching of advanced placement courses or other rigorous nationally or internationally recognized courses, if the school does not already have such programs or courses

☐ **Expand use of time:** The Superintendent may expand the school day or school year or both of the school

☐ **Add Kindergarten or pre-Kindergarten:** The Superintendent may, for an elementary school, add prekindergarten and full day kindergarten classes, if the school does not already have such classes

Financial and Asset Management

☐ **Reallocate school budget:** The Superintendent may reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the school

☐ **Reallocated district budget:** The Superintendent may provide additional funds to the school from the budget of the district, if the school does not already receive funding from the district at least equal to the average per pupil funding received for students of the same classification and grade level in the district. (If the school receives funding at least equal to the average per pupil funding, with the approval of the School Committee, the Superintendent can direct additional funds to the school.)

Human Resources

☐ **Attract and retain leaders and teachers:** The Superintendent may provide funds, subject to appropriation and following consultation with applicable local unions, to increase the salary of any administrator, or teacher in the school, to attract or retain highly qualified administrators, or teachers or to reward administrators, or teachers who work in underperforming schools that achieve the annual goals set forth in the turnaround plan

☐ **Make staffing changes:** The Superintendent may, following consultation with applicable local unions, require the principal and all administrators, teachers and staff to reapply for their positions in the school, with full discretion vested in the superintendent regarding their consideration of and decisions on rehiring based on the reapplications

☐ **Implement new systems:** The Superintendent may establish steps to assure a continuum of high expertise teachers by aligning the following processes with a common core of professional knowledge and skill: hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture and organizational structure

☒ **Leadership development:** The Superintendent may establish a plan for professional development for administrators at the school, with an emphasis on strategies that develop leadership skills and use the principles of distributive leadership

Professional Development and Collaboration

☒ **Embedded professional development:** The Superintendent may include a provision of job embedded professional development for teachers at the school, with an emphasis on strategies that involve teacher input and feedback

☐ **Expanded teacher planning time:** The Superintendent may provide for increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction

Leadership and Governance

- ☐ **Change Collective Bargaining and Policies:** The Superintendent may limit, suspend or change 1 or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement, as the contract or agreement applies to the school; provided, that the superintendent shall not reduce the compensation of an administrator, teacher or staff member unless the hours of the person are proportionately reduced
- ☐ **Change District Policies:** The Superintendent may limit, suspend or change 1 or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices relate to the school

Additional Strategies

- ☒ **Study best practices:** The Superintendent may develop a strategy to search for and study best practices in areas of demonstrated deficiency in the school
- ☐ **Address mobility and transiency:** The Superintendent may establish strategies to address mobility and transiency among the student population of the school
- ☒ **Additional strategies:** The Superintendent may include additional components based on the reasons why the school was designated as underperforming and the recommendations of the local stakeholder group

Section VII: Goals, Benchmarks, and Progress Monitoring

Describe the process the school and district will use to monitor the impact of the strategies as articulated in the benchmarks. (2-3 pages)

What gets measured, gets done. SHS has identified measurable annual goals and interim benchmarks for teachers / staff and students in alignment with each of the four turnaround practices. The use of progress monitoring as a data-based consistent practice will be a new structure and way of working at SHS in 2019-2020. Each benchmark in the following section has an identified source of data. Efforts have been taken to prioritize the use of quantitative data for benchmarks while seeking additional qualitative evidence through surveys and interviews to better understand the depth of practice and make mid-course corrections. (Additional references to progress monitoring activities are included in turnaround practice 1D.)

Four key strategies are required to ensure the effective use of progress monitoring practices:

1. Owners and administrative sponsors for each goal / benchmark will be defined by July 1, 2019. This task assigns implementation activities and accountability reporting to an individual stakeholder. While the principal is ultimately responsible for ensuring progress towards all goals, the distribution of leadership will expand ownership and allow actions and course corrections to be made with more flexibility. In addition to an owner / administrative sponsor, each team will be assigned goals and benchmarks to drive their contributions towards school improvement.
2. A calendar of monitoring activities will be created, published on the school's website and communicated to all staff by September 3, 2019. Anticipating dates will allow all to protect time, collect data and prepare for presentation of progress.
3. A benchmark dashboard will be created, published and updated quarterly.
4. The Aspen student information system's viewing rights, page usage, and reporting functions will be reviewed and updated prior to training administrators and staff in August 2019. This is described further in turnaround practice #4C.

Progress monitoring activities will minimally include:

Daily

- Monitoring of student work and instructional practice by administrators, department heads and instructional coaches
- Monitoring of behavior expectations for students and staff, use of Aspen system and response time

Monthly

- Reflections on school-wide benchmarks at the administrative leadership team meeting (2x/month)
- Learning walks focused on core instructional practices by the instructional leadership team, district liaisons, and staff
- Observations of teams and discussion of assigned benchmarks with team members by the administrative sponsor

- Communication with staff, students and families regarding progress towards key benchmark indicators related to attendance

October 2019

- Surveys of students and staff aligned to the spring administrator of the Panorama Culture Survey
- Reflection and deeper analysis on all benchmarks by the Turnaround Monitoring Team in partnership with the SHS administrative and redesign teams
- Family / Parent Panorama Culture Survey administration

November 2019

- Analysis of 2018-2019 accountability data with proactive implementation adjustments
- Community convening to celebrate progress, identify challenges and update strategies
- Progress report to the School Council and the School Committee

December 2019

- 360 degree feedback for administrators regarding leadership practices

January 2020

- Reflection and deeper analysis on all benchmarks by the Turnaround Monitoring Team in partnership with the SHS administrative and redesign teams

February 2020

- 360 degree feedback for administrators regarding leadership practices
- Surveys of students and staff aligned to the spring administrator of the Panorama Culture Survey

March 2020

- Reflection and deeper analysis on all benchmarks by the Turnaround Monitoring Team in partnership with the SHS administrative and redesign teams

April 2020

- Progress report to the School Council and the School Committee

May 2020

- Community convening to celebrate progress, identify challenges and update strategies
- Reflection and deeper analysis on all benchmarks by the Turnaround Monitoring Team in partnership with the SHS administrative and redesign teams
- Staff and Student Panorama Culture Survey administration

June 2020

- Annual reflection at an even deeper level to make adjustments for 2020-2021

Use the tables below to articulate the goals and benchmarks.

MAGs for Student Achievement	We will meet or exceed accountability targets as set by DESE for all students and the lowest performing students group.
<p><i>Defined by the Massachusetts' Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:</i></p> <p>Increase 4-year graduation rate from 87.6% (2017 cohort) to 90.6 % (2018 cohort) with the following targets for subgroups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High Needs: From 83.7 to 87.5% ● Economically Disadvantaged from 82.2. to 86.5% ● EL and Former EL from 71.0 to 78.4% ● Students with Disabilities: From 82.5 to 90.6 % ● Hispanic / Latino: From 84.6 to 89.6% ● White: From 89.0 to 92.0% <p>Increase extended engagement rate from 92.1% (2016) to 95.3% (2017 for use in 2019 accountability reporting) with the following targets for subgroups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High Needs: From 89.8 to 94.3% ● Economically Disadvantaged: From 89.1 to 93.7% ● EL and Former EL: From 85.3 to 91.0% ● Students with Disabilities: From 95.1 to 100% ● Hispanic / Latino: From 95.6 to 100% ● White: From 91.1 to 94.0% <p>Decrease annual dropout rate from 2.2 (2017) to 2.0% (2018 for use in 2019 accountability reporting) with the following targets for subgroups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High Needs: From 2.4 to 2.2% ● Economically Disadvantaged: From 2.6 to 2.3% ● EL and Former EL: From 2.4 to 2.2% ● Students with Disabilities: From 2.3 to 2.1% ● African American / Black: From 1.4 to 1.3% ● Hispanic / Latino: From 1.3 to 1.2% ● White: From 3.0 to 2.7% <p>Increase advanced coursework completion rate from 47.0 (2018) to 52.7% in 2019 accountability reporting with the following targets for subgroups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High Needs: From 31.1 to 36.7% ● Economically Disadvantaged: From 33.3 to 39.0% ● EL and Former EL: From 17.9 to 23.5% ● Students with Disabilities: From 12.8 to 18.7% ● African American / Black: From 33.3 to 39.8% ● Hispanic / Latino: From 33.8 to 41.3% ● White: From 60.1 to 65.5% 	

Increase English Language Arts achievement on the legacy MCAS test (grade 10 only), measured in Composite Performance Index (CPI) from 94.1 to 95.9% in 2019 accountability reporting with the following targets for subgroups:

- Lowest Performing: From 81.3 to 84.1%
- High Needs: 91.2 to 93.7 %
- Econ. Disadvantaged: 91.5 to 93.6%
- EL and Former EL: 87.0 to 90.5%
- Students with Disabilities: From 88.2 to 91.3%
- African American / Black: From 89.8 to 92.7%
- Hispanic / Latino: From 91.9 to 94.1%
- White: From 97.2 to 98.9%

Increase mathematics achievement on the legacy MCAS test (grade 10 only), measure in Composite Performance Index (CPI) from 79.2% to 81.8% in 2019 accountability reporting with the following targets for subgroups:

- Lowest Performing: From 46.9 to 50.7%
- High Needs: 70.1 to 72.5%
- Econ. Disadvantaged: 72.0 to 74.5%
- EL and Former EL: 60.3 to 65.8%
- Students with Disabilities: From 59.6 to 63.5%
- African American / Black: From 77.4 to 81.7%
- Hispanic / Latino: From 68.8 to 71.8%
- White: From 87.5 to 89.3%

Increase science achievement on the MCAS test (grade 10 only), measure in Composite Performance Index (CPI) from 80.4 to 82.9%

in 2019 accountability reporting with the following targets for subgroups:

- Lowest Performing: From 57.8 to 60.4%
- High Needs: 73.1 to 75.6%
- Econ. Disadvantaged: 74.4 to 77.1%
- EL and Former EL: 59.8 to 63.7%
- Students with Disabilities: From 71.7 to 74.9%
- Hispanic / Latino: From 71.7 to 75.3%
- White: From 86.5 to 89.2%

Decrease chronic absenteeism rate from 33.2% to 30.2% in 2019 accountability reporting with the following targets for subgroups:

- Lowest Performing: From 35.4 to 28.5%
- High Needs: 40.9 to 37.3%
- Econ. Disadvantaged: 43.0 to 39.0%
- EL and Former EL: 33.2 to 28.8%
- Students with Disabilities: From 45.3 to 41.5%
- African American / Black: From 39.1 to 35.4%
- Hispanic / Latino: From 38.3 to 34.4%
- White: From 28.3 to 24.7%

Turnaround Practice #1: Leadership, shared responsibility & professional collaboration

The school has established a community of practice through leadership, shared responsibility for all students and professional collaboration.

Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) for Student Achievement	We will meet or exceed accountability targets as set by DESE for all students and the lowest performing students group.
Interim Benchmarks for Teachers/Practitioners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 75% of teachers responding favorably to “ How effectively do school leaders communicate important information to staff?” (From 56% on the 2017-2018 Panorama Culture Survey) 2. Progress monitoring occurs biweekly (twice a month) at administrative team meetings, monthly through instructional rounds and quarterly with the Turnaround (Monitoring) Team as documented in meeting notes regarding benchmark data analysis, articulation of next steps, and follow-through on previous decisions 3. Increase consistency and quality of feedback provided by each administrator / evaluator to assigned individuals and teams on a monthly basis as demonstrated by written comments in Teachpoint, alignment to the instructional practices rubrics and the meeting tracker 4. Documented responsiveness by administrators to parent and community concerns as documented through the SHS School Council minutes on a month-to-month basis
Interim Benchmarks for Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 60% of students responding favorably to “teachers hold high expectations” (From 55% on the 2017-2018 Panorama Culture Survey) 2. Increase the number of formal leadership opportunities for students to contribute to school improvement initiatives (<i>From 1 student in 18-19 to at least 50 students in 19-20</i>) and utilize surveys quarterly to collect student feedback on operations, policies / governance, teaching and learning, and climate and culture (<i>response rate of at least 70%</i>) 3. 50% of students responding favorably to “How pleasant or unpleasant is the physical space at your school? (From 41% on the 2017-2018 Panorama Culture Survey)

Turnaround Practice #2: Intentional practices for improving instruction

The school employs intentional practices for improving teacher-specific and student-responsive instruction.

Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) for Student Achievement	We will meet or exceed accountability targets as set by DESE for all students and the lowest performing students group.
Other MAGs 3 required by statute: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student acquisition of twenty-first century skills 2. Development of college readiness 3. Developmentally appropriate child assessments from pre-kindergarten through third grade, if applicable 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase to XX% percent the number of high school graduates completing Mass Core requirement (From XX%) 2. At least 90% of students per grade level completing the outlined grade level MyCAP activities (including 3 college and career readiness workshops per grade, at least 2 individual counseling sessions per year, and defined Naviance tasks) 3. <i>Not applicable</i>
Interim Benchmarks for Teachers/Practitioners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 90% of teachers complete at least one coaching cycle with an instructional coach and/or head teacher February 2020. 2. All collaborative teams meet monthly to analyze data for strengths and challenges, identify actions to address student learning needs, and engage in co-planning to support implementation of standards based instructional and grading practices regularly communicated, as evidenced by meeting notes, observations and staff feedback. 3. Full implementation of standards based grading practices at grades 9 and 10 in the core areas as documented through student report cards in January 2020. Readiness to implement standards based grading practices for grades 11-12 in the core areas and identified electives for 2020-2021 documented by the inclusion of prioritized standards and proficiency scales in Aspen by June 2020.
Interim Benchmarks for Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase in the percent of students having at least one community based learning experience including early college experience in high school (includes AP, PLTW, dual enrollment courses) and/or completing a work-based learning experience outside the classroom of at least 40 hours as compared to each semester in 2018-2019 (Collecting baseline)

	<p>2. Increase number of students achieving mastery of standards on School City interim assessment benchmarks (3x per year) at the following rates for content areas and subgroups:</p> <p><i>English Language Arts 9:</i> <i>At least 70% of all students (from 26% in 2018-2019)</i> EL and Former EL: 25% (from 0% in 2018-2019) Students with Disabilities: 25% (from 8% in 2018-2019)</p> <p><i>English Language Arts 10: To be determined</i> EL and Former EL: Students with Disabilities:</p> <p><i>Algebra:</i> <i>At least 50% of all students (from 18% in 2018-2019)</i> EL and Former EL: 25% (from 1.4% in 2018-2019) Students with Disabilities: 25% (from 2% in 2018-2019)</p> <p><i>Geometry:</i> <i>At least 60% of all students (from 36% in 2018-2019)</i> EL and Former EL: (25% (from 3.3% in 2018-2019) Students with Disabilities: 25% (from 6% in 2018-2019)</p> <p>3. At least 70% of students respond favorably in the overall response rate for School Rigorous Expectations on the Panorama Culture Survey - a measure of much students feel that their teachers hold them to high expectations around effort, understanding, persistence, and performance in class (From 59% to 70%)</p>
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Turnaround Practice #3: Student-specific supports and instruction to all students

The school is able to provide student-specific supports and interventions informed by data and the identification of student-specific needs.

MAGs for Student Achievement	We will meet or exceed accountability targets as set by DESE for all students and the lowest performing students group.
Interim Benchmarks for Teachers/Practitioners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More than 90% of teachers utilize the school-wide behavior management system and more than 80% of related administrative communication is completed within 1 school day of reporting a student incident as documented within Aspen 2. All teachers (grades 9-12) and student support staff meet 2x per semester to review performance, attendance, discipline and social-emotional data and create responsive student-centered interventions. 3. 100% of teachers and staff demonstrate proficiency upon the completion of training in using the conduct and journal pages within Aspen to document family contact and student support interventions
Interim Benchmarks for Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By June 2020, create and pilot the use of the student needs assessment protocol based on the adaptation of the SPS K-8 City Connects model as documented by the production of tools and platforms to be fully implemented in 2020-2021 2. At least 90% of 9th grade students entering SHS with early warning indicators are assessed and aligned with supports within 45 days of the opening of school 3. At least 95% of students (including those who transfer in by November 1, 2019) receive orientation and ongoing training in the behavior expectations at SHS at least three times per year. As a result, 95% of students will be able to successfully outline the expectations for students and staff on quarterly surveys.

Turnaround Practice #4: School Culture and Climate

A safe, orderly, and respectful environment for students and a collegial and collaborative culture among teachers.

MAGs for Student Achievement	We will meet or exceed accountability targets as set by DESE for all students and the lowest performing students group.
Other MAGs 7 required by statute: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent and family engagement 2. Building a culture of academic success among students 3. Building a culture of student support and success among school faculty and staff 4. Student attendance, dismissal rates, and exclusion rates (a measure is needed for each of these three items) 5. Student safety and discipline 6. Student promotion and dropout rates 7. Graduation rates (high schools only) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 90% of staff members will engage five parents / families monthly in two-way meaningful communication about students' learning as documented in the Aspen journal pages 2. 90% of long-term substitute coverage is identified and communicated to students and families prior to the beginning of the teacher's leave. 3. At least 80% of staff (in classrooms and beyond) observed implementing the key instructional practices of welcoming environment and meaningful interactions supported through professional development, as evidenced by data collected through learning walks and feedback forms 4A. Decrease from 44.6 (17-18) to 35 (19-20) in the percentage of students absent 10+ days 4B. 10% decrease in the number of dismissals from school (9/4/18-6/7/19 = 2,204; 9/4/19-6/4/19 = 1,984) 4C. Decrease the percentage of all students who are suspended out-of-school from XX to XX% and special education students from XX to XX% as a result of the decrease of behavior referrals referenced in number 5 below. <i>(NEED BASELINE from 19-20 final data)</i> 5. 10% decrease each month from November 2019 -May 2020 in the number of student discipline referrals for non-drug, non-violent and non-criminal incidents and a monthly decrease in the number of student discipline referrals for violent and criminal incidents (Baseline to be captured in October 2019 through the use of the required ASPEN system) 6. Increase in the percentage of "Freshman On-Track" on a quarterly basis (defined by 92%+ attendance, 6.0 credits, and no more than 1 "failure" in one core course) 7. Increase the 4 year graduation rate for EL and Former EL students from 71.0 to at least 78.4%

<p>Interim Benchmarks for Teachers/Practitioners</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 45% of teachers respond favorably to “Overall, how positive is the working environment of your school?” (From 28% on the 2017-2018 Panorama Culture Survey) 2. At least 60% of teachers respond “once in a while” or “almost never” to “How often are people disrespectful to others at your school?” (From 36% on the 2017-2018 Panorama Culture Survey) 3. 90% of teachers complete the social-emotional learning professional development and at least 70% utilize a strategy in their classroom as documented through monthly instructional rounds
<p>Interim Benchmarks for Students</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 50% increase in the number of students who respond “most of my teachers” or “all of my teachers” to “When your teachers ask how you are doing, how many of them are really interested in your answer?” on the Panorama Culture Survey (From 37% in 2017-2018 to 55%) 2. 50% increase in students responding “almost never” or “once in a while” to “How often are people disrespectful to others at your schools?” on the Panorama Culture Survey (From 20% in 2017-2018 to 30%) 3. Families respond with 50% or greater with “quite well” or “extremely well” to “At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?” on the Panorama Culture Survey.